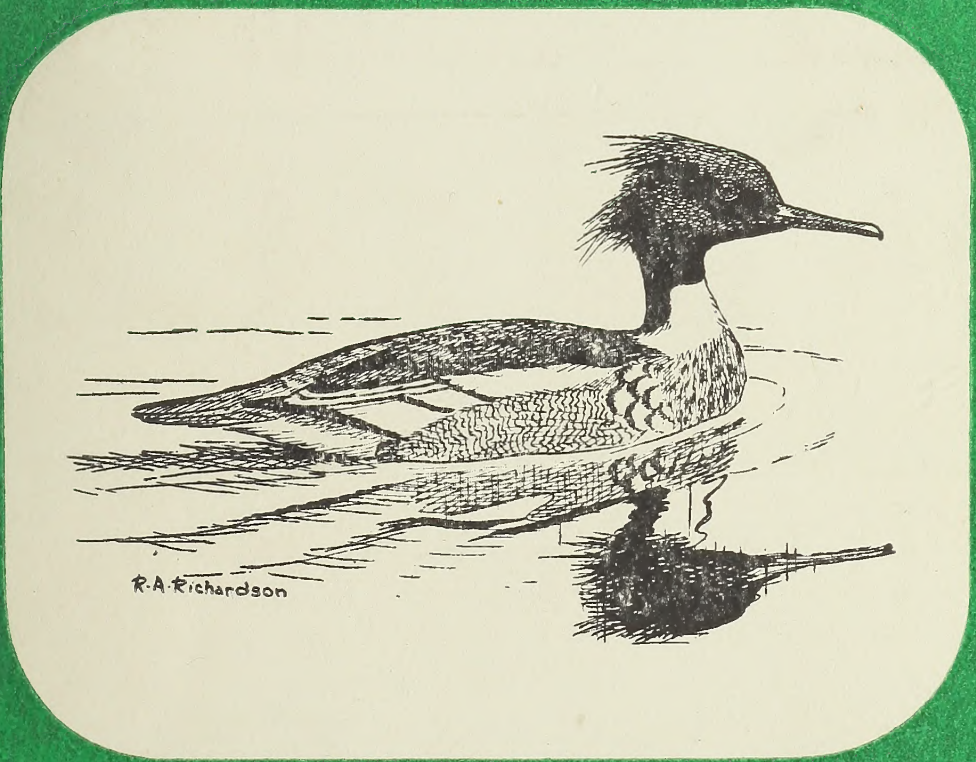


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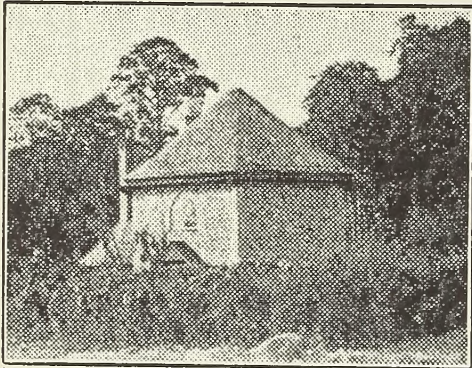
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THE LONDON BIRD REPORT

Number 21, 1956

CONTENTS

Kingfisher, <i>Photographed by M. D. England</i>	Frontispiece
Introduction	1
Contributors to Systematic List	4
Birds of the London Area, 1956	6
Wildfowl and Wader Movements in the London Area in the severe weather of February, 1956	41
The Census of Great Crested Grebes, 1946 to 1955	48
Report on the Dungeness Bird Observatory, 1956	57
The Census of Mute Swans, 1955 and 1956	58
Bird Ringing Report, 1956	63
Book Review	64
Recording Arrangements	65

Published December, 1957, by

THE LONDON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY



THE LONDON BIRD REPORT

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Introduction

THE Society's book *The Birds of the London Area since 1900* which was published in January, 1957, received many favourable reviews. As stated in the review in *Bird Study*, "This book will provide the basis for all future work on the birds of the London Area for a long time to come." It provides not only a precise summary of the status of each species recorded in the London Area from 1900 to 1954, but has chapters on the physical setting of the Area, on each of the main habitats, on migration, and on roosts and fly-lines. It will be essential to all interested in the birds of the Area, but is unfortunately already out of print. As there is some possibility of a reprint, those who have not yet been able to obtain a copy are recommended to get in touch with the publishers, Messrs. Collins, St. James's Place, London.

Observers will find the book of great value when deciding which notes to submit to the recorders of the Ornithological Section. All records of uncommon or rare species are required, and evidence of breeding for local nesting species. For common species, any information revising or amplifying that given in the book will be welcome. It should be borne in mind that birds which are common elsewhere in the Area may be uncommon or rare in Inner London, and therefore worth recording.

The outstanding feature of the year was the influx of wildfowl, waders, and other species during the severe weather in February. Tufted Ducks, Red-breasted Mergansers and Smew were in record numbers; many reports of Whooper and Bewick's Swans compared with only two previous records of Whooper and about fifteen of Bewick's Swans since 1900; the variety of waders was unprecedented in winter. Other species which appeared in unusual numbers were Black-throated and Red-throated Divers and Slavonian Grebe. A paper by R. C. Homes on page 41 discusses the movements of wildfowl and waders in relation to the weather conditions.

Lesser Black-backed Gulls were exceptionally numerous at Beddington Sewage Farm at the beginning of the year, the numbers reaching 100 on several occasions in January and February.

Ruffs wintered at Perry Oaks Sewage Farm for the second winter in succession and were again present in December. There were also records of up to seven at West Thurrock Marsh in November and December.

Unusual species seen in February included a Ferruginous Duck, a Purple Sandpiper (only the fourth since 1900), and an Iceland Gull. A party of 34 Kittiwakes at King George V Reservoir on March 4th was the largest flock reported since the early years of this century.

Five species were recorded for the first time this century: Little Buntings at Beddington Sewage Farm and Staines Reservoir in March and April, Richard's Pipit at Staines Reservoir, also in April, Purple Heron at Fishers Green and Lesser Grey Shrike at Banstead Downs in May, and a Little Egret at Old Parkbury in July. Other unusual species seen in the spring and summer were Avocets at Walthamstow Reservoirs and West Thurrock Marsh in April, and a Golden Oriole at Morden in June. Wood Sandpipers were unusually numerous on the spring passage.

With the extensive clearance of the City bombed sites continuing, the number of pairs of Black Redstarts nesting there fell again. Four pairs, however, bred at Croydon New Power Station, a site which had occasionally been used in previous years, but only by single pairs. The number of pairs of Little Ringed Plovers which spent the summer in the Area was 25, the same as in 1955, but only 15 pairs are known to have nested. The number of occupied nests of the Heron was 176, one less than in 1955. The Woodlark appears to be decreasing.

A feature of the autumn passage was the widespread movement in a general north-westerly direction of diurnal migrants on October 27th. Details will be found in the systematic list under the species concerned, Skylark, Redwing, Starling, Chaffinch and Brambling. On March 24th, a small return movement of Chaffinches and Bramblings had been noted. More observations on diurnal migrants would be welcomed.

There was a heavy autumn passage of Lesser Black-backed Gulls, during which large numbers gathered to roost at Girling and Island Barn Reservoirs, the largest flock being 7,600 at Girling Reservoir on August 20th.

Rare species noted during the autumn passage were a Pectoral Sandpiper at Epsom Sewage Farm and an Ortolan Bunting at the Brent Reservoir, both in September.

A Stone Curlew flew over Barn Elms Reservoirs on the unusual date of December 27th. A Storm Petrel was seen flying down river mobbed by gulls off Stone Marshes in September, and in December another was found with a broken wing in Epping Forest.

The total number of species recorded in the Area in 1956 was 198, the highest in recent years.

The B.T.O. census of Great Crested Grebes ended in 1955, and a paper by W. D. Melliush on page 48 summarizes the results in our Area. The census of Mute Swans in 1955 and 1956 is the subject of a paper by S. Cramp on page 58.

The Ornithological Section continues to take part in the Census of Heronries and the Wildfowl Inquiry, and in 1958 will be investigating the breeding distribution of the Lapwing and Nightjar and the distribution of the Meadow Pipit in the whole area, and the breeding distribution of the Carrion Crow in Inner London only. Details of these investigations are published in the Recording Circular which may be obtained from the Recorders.

With the introduction of the new B.T.O. ringing permit system, the former L.N.H.S. ringing scheme could no longer function effectively. Details of the changes made are given in the Bird Ringing Report on page 63, which includes a note on the trapping station at Beddington Sewage Farm under the direction of Mr. B. S. Milne. Details of the most interesting recoveries are given in the systematic list under the following species : Tufted Duck, Greater Black-backed Gull, Common Gull, Black-headed Gull, Swallow, Fieldfare, Song Thrush, Redwing, Black Redstart, Yellow Wagtail, Chaffinch and Brambling.

The Society continues to support the work of the Dungeness Bird Observatory, in which many members take part, and a brief report appears on page 57.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Records Committee wishes to thank all those who have contributed to this Report, and to welcome new members to the Society. We gratefully acknowledge assistance given by the following : Miss D. A. Rook, Mrs. R. E. Teagle, B. P. Austin, R. E. Emmett, J. Izzard, J. L. F. Parslow, C. M. Perrins and R. E. Scott for entering and checking records ; R. E. Richardson for the drawing of a Red-breasted Merganser on the cover ; M. D. England for the photograph of the Kingfisher ; L. Baker for assistance with the blocks and the map ; the Editors of *British Birds* and the *Surrey Bird Report*, the officers of the Essex Bird Watching and Preservation Society, the Kent Ornithological Society, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Zoological Society of London, the Committee on Bird Sanctuaries in the Royal Parks, the Ruislip Natural History Society and the Whitgift School Selborne Society for exchanges of records and information. We have also to acknowledge many kindnesses from the Metropolitan Water Board, the London County Council, the Middlesex County Council and the Croydon Corporation.

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* Records for Surrey made available by the editors of the *Surrey Bird Report*.

BIRDS OF THE LONDON AREA, 1956

A REPORT OF THE BIRD LIFE WITHIN TWENTY MILES OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

THIS report follows the British Ornithologists' Union's "Check-List of the Birds of Great Britain and Ireland" (1952) based on the Wetmore classification, and the numbers preceding each species refer to that List, where the full scientific name will be found. The vernacular names are those adopted by the Editors of *British Birds* magazine as announced in the January, 1953, issue (Vol. XLVI, p. 1).

All records are for 1956 except where otherwise stated. The initials following each record refer to the observer(s) responsible for it, whose name(s) may be obtained by reference to the list of contributors on page 4.

The six counties within the circle of twenty miles radius are indicated by their initials, viz.:— B = Bucks ; E = Essex ; H = Herts ; K = Kent ; M = Middlesex ; S = Surrey. Several of the Lea Valley reservoirs are partly in Middlesex, but all records referring to them are published under Essex, following the policy adopted by W. E. Glegg in his histories of the birds of Essex (1929) and Middlesex (1935). The following abbreviations are also used :— *B.B.* = *British Birds* magazine ; *L.B.R.* = *London Bird Report* ; P.D.S.A. = People's Dispensary for Sick Animals ; R.S.P.C.A. = Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ; G.P. = gravel pit ; Res. = reservoir ; S.F. = sewage farm ; N., E., S., and W. are used for the cardinal points of the compass, but are intended only to indicate the general direction of flight.

An open map of the London Area will be found useful for a full appreciation of many of the records. As the history of some of the species is intended to be continuous, reference to the systematic list of previous issues of the *L.B.R.* is recommended.

Records which have been published in the *Essex Bird Report*, 1956, are indicated by an asterisk which is placed by the particular record or, where all records of a species have been published, by the county initial "E."

Divers

More records than usual, largely due to an exceptional influx during the severe weather in February.

1 Black-throated Diver

E* Lea valley reservoirs, one or more present on most dates from Feb. 5th to Apr. 7th ; on Feb. 25th, at least five (JLFP *et al.*). Girling Res.,

one on the early dates of Aug. 11th and 20th (JLFP). Walthamstow Res., one on the Banbury Res. from Sept. 24th to the end of the year (JF, WCD).

M King George VI Res., one Feb. 26th and 27th and Mar. 4th (nine observers).

K Stone Marshes, one on Mar. 27th, two on Apr. 9th (WIB).

S Barn Elms Res., one from Feb. 2nd to 4th (REE, JI). Walton Res., single birds on several dates from Feb. 25th to Mar. 18th (many observers); Walton G.P., one on Mar. 7th and 8th (NJW, DP): there were at least two birds, as on Mar. 8th DP was able to see one on the reservoir and another on the gravel pit simultaneously, and AGGT considered that one on the reservoir on Mar. 16th was not the same bird as seen on Feb. 28th.

2 Great Northern Diver

E* Girling Res., one on Feb. 18th, 25th and 26th (WCD, JF, JLFP). King George V Res., one on Feb. 18th, 19th and 20th (JLFP).

M Kempton Park Res., one from Oct. 7th to 21st (BEC, REE, EMG, NG).

4 Red-throated Diver

E Lea valley reservoirs, one to three on many dates from Feb. 5th to Apr. 8th (WCD, JF, JLFP *et al.*); one at King George V Res., on Oct. 14th (FR).

H Hilfield Park Res., one on Mar. 13th (GBDC).

M Isleworth, one on the Thames on Mar. 11th (VFH). King George VI Res., one on Feb. 4th was found dead on Feb. 11th (CAWR, IMW). Staines Res., one from Jan. 1st to Mar. 29th, two on Feb. 25th and 26th and Mar. 17th and 25th (many observers).

K Stone Marshes, one on Apr. 9th (WIB).

S Hawsey Green pond, one in early February (AJH). Island Barn Res., one on Feb. 26th (DP). Kew-Richmond, one on the Thames from Mar. 2nd to 17th (AQ, PJR); no doubt the bird seen at Isleworth, Middx., on Mar. 11th. Walton Res., an oiled bird first seen on Feb. 25th was found dead on Mar. 5th, when a second bird was present (many observers).

5 Great Crested Grebe

A paper on the ten-year census which ended in 1955 is published on page 48.

M Inner London: two flying over the British Museum (Natural History) on Sept. 18th (DG, JLFP, RS).

6 Red-necked Grebe

E* Girling Res., single birds on Feb. 25th, Apr. 2nd and 8th, and May 5th (JF, WCD, JLFP). King George V Res., single birds on Feb. 12th, 18th, 19th and 20th and on Apr. 15th (JLFP). Walthamstow Res., one on Dec. 2nd (WCD).

- H Hilfield Park Res., one on Feb. 12th (GBDC, ABS, EHW).
 M Hampton Res., one on Jan. 1st (JI). Queen Mary Res., single birds on Feb. 26th, Dec. 2nd, 9th and 12th (JFWB, GCG, WHT, CMV). Savehay G.P., near Denham, one on Feb. 26th and 29th and Mar. 4th (IGJ, BPP *et al.*). Staines reservoirs, one on several dates from Jan. 21st to Mar. 18th (many observers).
 K Stone Marshes, one on Feb. 13th (WIB).
 S Walton Res., one from Feb. 16th to Mar. 4th, and perhaps the same bird at Walton G.P. from Mar. 21st to Apr. 1st (many observers).

7 Slavonian Grebe

- E *Girling Res., one or two from Feb. 5th to 25th, three on Feb. 26th (WCD, JF, JLFP). *King George V Res., single birds, Feb. 18th to 20th and Mar. 24th and 30th (JLFP). Walthamstow Res., two on Feb. 25th, four from Mar. 4th to 17th, one until Apr. 8th (JF, WCD).
 H Hilfield Park Res., one on Feb. 3rd (ABS).
 M Queen Mary Res., two on Feb. 26th (GCG, WHT, CMV). Staines reservoirs, single birds on Jan. 9th, on many dates from Feb. 26th to Apr. 2nd, and on Nov. 4th (many observers).
 S Island Barn Res., one on Mar. 11th (DP). Walton and Molesey Res., single birds on Mar. 2nd, 23rd and 26th (DAI, AGGT).

8 Black-necked Grebe

- E* Girling Res., single birds on Aug. 20th and Sept. 2nd (JCE, JLFP). King George V Res., one on Apr. 15th (JCE), one to three from Aug. 5th to 24th, one Oct. 21st and Nov. 25th (JLFP). Walthamstow Res., one on Aug. 21st (JF).
 M Hampton Res., one on Jan. 1st (BEC). Queen Mary Res., one on Mar. 4th (CMV). Springwell G.P., near Harefield, one on Apr. 8th (IGJ). Staines reservoirs, single birds on Jan. 8th, 11th and 15th and Feb. 18th (GBDC, PRC, CAW, CAWR); present on many dates from July 15th to the end of the year, with a maximum of six on several dates in September and October (many observers).
 S Barn Elms Res., one from Sept. 1st to 17th (five observers). Island Barn Res., one on Feb. 16th (AGGT), two on Aug. 22nd (DP). Walton Res., one on Feb. 19th and from 26th to 29th (five observers).

14 Storm Petrel

- E Epping Forest, one found on Dec. 9th had a broken wing (BTW).
 K One flying down river mobbed by gulls off Stone Marshes on Sept. 15th (DCL).

27 Gannet

- S An adult picked up at Barnes railway bridge on Jan. 31st was released later in the Thames estuary by the R.S.P.C.A. (JI).

29 Shag

M King George VI Res., an adult on Mar. 11th (WHD, CMV, CAW).

30 Heron

There were 176 occupied nests, one less than in 1955.

- E *Little Parndon, 9 (WCD); *Walthamstow Res., 65 (AG, JLFP, PFCR); Wanstead Park, 2 (GW).
- M Kempton Park, 83 (EMG). Isleworth Eyot 1 (VFH); this site has probably been occupied annually since 1952.
- S Gatton Park 10 (HB). Richmond Park 6 (BAM).

31 Purple Heron

E* Fishers Green G.P., one seen in flight about mid-day and again in the evening on May 12th (DAH, JLFP). This is the first record for the London Area in the present century. Extracts from the observers' notes have been published in the *Essex Bird Report* for 1956.

32 Little Egret

H Old Parkbury G.P., one on July 1st and 2nd (ARM, EHW *et al.*). Very full descriptions have been received. This is the first record for the London Area in the present century.

46 Teal

E* A pair at Fishers Green G.P. throughout the summer, but no evidence of breeding (JLFP).

47 Garganey

- E* King George V Res., a drake on Apr. 2nd (DK). Romford S.F., three flew over on Aug. 8th (RRS).
- H Old Parkbury, a duck on Apr. 22nd (EHW).
- M Perry Oaks S.F., a drake on Apr. 25th (DEDC). Staines Res., a drake on Apr. 29th (WHT).
- S Barn Elms Res., one on Aug. 11th (MC). Epsom S.F., a pair on Mar. 31st and a drake on June 30th (KDE).

49 Gadwall

- H Hilfield Park Res., one on Oct. 28th (BLS). Old Parkbury, a pair on June 1st (EHW).
- M Hampton Res., a drake on Jan. 29th and 30th (MJC, PRC). Staines reservoirs, up to seven from Jan. 8th to Apr. 29th (many observers); one on Oct. 28th (TE).
- K Ruxley G.P., one on Jan. 15th, Feb. 4th and 5th, and two on Oct. 27th (AWB, FJH).
- S Barn Elms Res., present from the beginning of the year until April and from Sept. to Dec., maximum 20 on Apr. 8th (six observers); three pairs throughout the breeding season, one of which nested successfully (HPM). Richmond Park, Pen Ponds, four on Jan. 30th,

three on Mar. 4th ; from Sept. 23rd to the end of the year nearly always present, maximum 12 on Oct. 19th (EDB, GG *et al.*). Walton Res., one Feb. 25th and two on the 27th ; a duck on Nov. 17th (JC, DP).

52 Pintail

- E Walthamstow Res., two on Nov. 12th (EHW). West Thurrock Marsh, two ducks on Feb. 11th (MJE).
- H Hilfield Park Res., single drakes on Mar. 4th, Nov. 29th and Dec. 2nd (BLS, EHW).
- M Ponders End S.F., a duck on Sept. 2nd (FR). Perry Oaks S.F., seven on Aug. 18th (PEB, BWC). Staines reservoirs, single birds on Jan. 11th, Feb. 26th and 27th, Mar. 4th, Aug. 19th and Nov. 25th (six observers).
- K Ruxley G.P., a drake from Feb. 4th to 27th (GWA, EHG, FJH, DCL).
- S Barn Elms Res., up to three from Feb. 1st to Mar. 4th (JI, SK *et al.*). Walton Res., five drakes and two ducks on Feb. 27th, and a duck on the 28th (KDE, DP, AGGT).

53 Shoveler

- M Staines, one pair bred (CMV, CAW).

55 Scaup

- E* Fishers Green G.P., a duck on Mar. 4th (DK). King George V Res., a drake Feb. 18th, a duck Mar. 11th ; up to four from Nov. 25th to Dec. 29th (MC, JLFP). Walthamstow Res., up to three from Mar. 4th to 30th ; two drakes on Dec. 25th (WCD, JF, RBW).
- H Aldenham Res., a drake on Oct. 30th (EHW). Hilfield Park Res., up to five Jan. 8th to 10th, one or two Feb. 1st to 12th ; two ducks on Sept. 30th (GBDC, BLS).
- M Brent Res., a duck from Jan. 1st to 4th, two Feb. 4th, and a drake on several dates from Feb. 25th to Mar. 22nd (six observers). Feltham G.P., two drakes on Mar. 29th (DJB, PLB). Queen Mary Res., two Mar. 4th, three Mar. 17th, one Apr. 15th (REE, CMV). Staines reservoirs, present from Jan. until Apr. 29th, maximum 24 on Mar. 25th (CMV *et al.*). Inner London : St. James's Park, a drake on Apr. 19th and 20th (TLB, ABMM, WGT, AFGW) ; Victoria Park, a drake on Mar. 9th and 14th (KFH).
- K Stone, two ducks on Feb. 13th (WIB).
- S Barn Elms Res., up to seven from Feb. 4th to Apr. 1st (six observers). Island Barn Res., two on Mar. 4th and 11th and Apr. 8th (RCH). Molesey Res., a drake on Nov. 25th (DAI). South Norwood Lake, a drake on Mar. 18th and 19th (DAW). Walton Res., one or two on several dates from Feb. 5th to Mar. 3rd (BEC, JC, RCH, DP) ; a drake on Dec. 23rd and 27th (BEC).

56 Tufted Duck

Breeding season records only are given.

- E* Fishers Green G.P., of six pairs, at least two probably attempted to nest, but no young were seen ; Nazeing G.P., up to ten pairs present, and seven ducks with young seen in July (JLFP).
- H Broxbourne G.P., one pair bred (JLFP). Maple Cross, three pairs, possibly four, hatched young (NHP, BPF).
- M Inner London : breeding took place in Buckingham Palace Gardens (one pair), Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens (three pairs), and St. James's Park (at least nine pairs) (EHG, CHH, RWH, CHFP, WGT).
- K Ruxley G.P., two pairs bred (FJH).
- S Breeding confirmed at Barn Elms Res., one pair, Barnes Pond, six pairs, and Richmond Park, four pairs (EDB, RHM). Inner London : Battersea Park, bred for the first time, but young killed by Ruddy Shelducks (JNAR).
- One found dead at King George V Res., on Feb. 4th had been ringed as an adult on 18th Dec., 1954, at Lekkerkerk, near Rotterdam, Holland.

57 Pochard

Breeding records only are given.

- E* Nazeing G.P., a duck with five young in July (JLFP).
- M An adult with young seen at a gravel pit near Colnbrook (BWC). Inner London : Regent's Park, *c.* six pairs bred (HCH, WGT, EHW).
- K Ruxley G.P., two ducks with young on Aug. 5th (GWA).
- S Inner London : Battersea Park, three pairs bred (JNAR).

58 Ferruginous Duck

- S A drake at Barn Elms Res. on Feb. 19th and 20th (SK, MJK, *et al.*) ; one at Walton Res. from 23rd to 28th (GCG, DP, AGGT *et al.*), was presumably the same bird.

60 Goldeneye

- E Lea Valley reservoirs, recorded up to May 1st and from Oct. 20th, maximum, 25 at King George V Res. on Mar. 3rd (JLFP *et al.*). Nazeing G.P., one on Feb. 26th (JLFP).
- H Hilfield Park Res., up to five from Jan. 1st to Apr. 7th ; single birds on several dates in Oct., Nov., and Dec. (six observers). Troy Mill G.P., three on Mar. 3rd (IGJ).
- M Brent Res., up to three Feb. 15th to 29th (GCG, DWT, GOW). Kempton Park Res., five on Mar. 18th (GCG). Ruislip Res., one on Oct. 26th and 28th (RHM, ART, EHW). Staines reservoirs, recorded up to May 3rd, maximum 32 on Feb. 25th, and from Oct. 21st, maximum 30 on Dec. 26th (many observers).
- K Records of single birds at Danson Park, Ruxley G.P. and Stone in Feb. and Mar., and at Ruxley G.P. on Nov. 4th (five observers).

- S Barn Elms Res., one or two on several dates in Feb. (MC, SK, FHJ, RHM).
Island Barn Res., one on Oct. 21st (DP). Walton and Molesey
reservoirs, recorded up to Apr. 24th and from Nov. 10th, maximum
20 on Mar. 10th (many observers).

62 Velvet Scoter

- E* Girling Res., a drake from Feb. 18th to 26th (WCD, JF, JLFP).
M Brent Res., an immature drake first seen on Feb. 18th was found dead
early in March (many observers).
S Island Barn Res., a duck on Feb. 26th (DP). Richmond Park, a duck
on the Pen Ponds on Jan. 30th (NFS). Walton Res., one first seen
on Feb. 23rd, four from Feb. 26th to Mar. 25th, one last seen
Mar. 31st (many observers).

62 Common Scoter

- E *Fishers Green G.P., one on Mar. 25th (JCE). *Girling Res., one on
Feb. 25th and two on the 26th (JLFP). King George V Res., a drake
on *Aug. 6th (JLFP). Walthamstow Res., two on Feb. 18th and three
on the 25th (FRT).
H Hilfield Park Res., a drake on Feb. 22nd, four Mar. 31st and a duck
on Oct. 28th (BLS, ABS, EHW).
M Hampton Res., a duck on Feb. 19th, Mar. 3rd and 4th (five
observers). Queen Mary Res., one Feb. 26th to Mar. 25th but five
Mar. 17th ; one Mar. 30th (MDK, CMV). Staines reservoirs, one on
many dates from Jan. 15th to Apr. 1st, but 19 on Feb. 5th ; one on
Nov. 11th (many observers).
K Dartford, one found on the saltings on July 15th had been dead about
2-3 days (JKG).
S Barn Elms Res., one on Jan. 1st and 4th (MDK). Island Barn Res.,
a drake on July 19th (DP). Molesey Res., one on Mar. 17th (GCG).
Walton Res., four on Oct. 15th (NFS).

69 Red-breasted Merganser

- The influx in February and March was exceptional ; the largest flock
previously recorded was five.
E The first reports for the Lea Valley reservoirs were of c. 50 on Feb. 18th.
As there was some movement between the reservoirs it is not possible
to be precise concerning the total numbers, but there were probably
between 60 and 70 in the last week of February and the first two
weeks of March. Thereafter the numbers fell steadily, and the last
were three on Apr. 7th (seven observers). West Thurrock, two on
Feb. 12th and one on the 25th (RH).
H West Hyde G.P., a drake on Mar. 11th (DWB).
M Brent Res., one Feb. 22nd, four on 25th and three on 26th (GBDC,
DWT, GOW). Isleworth, a drake on the Thames on Feb. 21st (PJR).
Queen Mary Res., four Feb. 26th, five Mar. 4th and one Mar. 11th

(CMV). Savehay G.P., four on Feb. 26th and 28th (IGJ, NHP). Staines reservoirs, present from Feb. 3rd to Mar. 30th, maximum seven on Mar. 14th (many observers) ; an immature drake on Nov. 4th (HPM, SKR, CMV, CAW).

- K Greenwich Park, an immature drake found dead on Feb. 16th (RET, WGT). Ruxley G.P., one or two from Feb. 18th to Mar. 4th, but six on Feb. 19th (five observers). Stone, one on Feb. 13th (WIB).
- S Barn Elms Res., seven Feb. 18th, nine Feb. 25th and four Mar. 4th (nine observers). Island Barn Res., up to four from Feb. 12th to Mar. 15th (DP, AGGT). Walton Res., 24 on Feb. 5th, and present from Feb. 25th to Mar. 21st, maximum 13 on Feb. 27th (many observers).

70 **Goosander**

Recorded up to Apr. 22nd and from Oct. 20th ; maxima for the main localities only are given.

- E Girling Res., 63 on Feb. 26th ; *King George V Res., 91 on Mar. 4th (JLFP).
- M Queen Mary Res., 65 on Jan. 22nd (CMV). Staines reservoirs, 82 on Feb. 4th (RCH).
- S Barn Elms Res., 31 on Feb. 3rd (JI). Island Barn Res., 50 on Dec. 16th (DP). Walton Res., 230 on Feb. 12th (PBL).

71 **Smew**

Recorded up to Apr. 2nd and from Oct. 17th ; maxima for the main localities and all records for Inner London are given.

- E* Girling Res., 65 on Feb. 18th (DAH, JLFP). King George V Res., 85 on Mar. 3rd (DAH, JLFP). Walthamstow Res., 51 on Feb. 25th (WCD).
- M Brent Res., 104 on Feb. 28th (GBDC). Queen Mary Res., 14 on Mar. 11th (CMV). Staines reservoirs, 43 on Feb. 26th (CMV). Inner London : St. James's Park, a red-head on Feb. 9th and 13th, and one red-head and three drakes on Feb. 21st (HAF, AJH, AM, AFGW).
- S Barn Elms Res., 44 on Feb. 2nd (JI). Walton G.P., 22 on Mar. 3rd (RCH).

73 **Shelduck**

- E King George V Res., one Feb. 5th, four Feb. 7th, one Nov. 18th (JLFP, PFCR). Nazeing G.P., one on Apr. 28th (JLFP). Rainham marshes, two on Mar. 24th and four on Apr. 28th (RH). Walthamstow Res., single birds on Mar. 17th, Apr. 15th and 28th (WCD, JF, GCG). West Thurrock Marsh, four on Feb. 11th, three on Feb. 25th, one Apr. 1st, two May 19th (MJE, RH) ; one July 14th and two Dec. 24th (RH).
- H Hilfield Park Res., up to three from Feb. 2nd to 6th, two on Apr. 26th and two adults on Aug. 5th (GBDC, IGJ, BLS, ABS).

- M Brent Res., one on Dec. 21st (JFWB). Feltham G.P., one on May 12th (BWC). King George VI Res., single birds on Sept. 11th and Nov. 11th (PRC, EHW). Staines Res., an adult on Jan. 7th (CMV, EHW).
- K Stone, two on Apr. 7th and one Apr. 14th (FJH).
- S Barn Elms Res., two on Apr. 22nd (DWT).

75 Grey Lag Goose

- E* Nazeing G.P., one in flight with two Mute Swans on Apr. 29th (JLFP).

76 White-fronted Goose

- E* King George V Res., three in flight on Jan. 28th (JLFP).
- K Black Fen, a party of *c.* 20 heard calling flying W. at 19.00 hrs. on Jan. 2nd (GWA). Orpington, 28 flying S.W. on Jan. 1st (DCL) ; a large skein, apparently moving N.E., calling, at 01.40 hrs. on Mar. 19th (EHG). Petts Wood station, six flying N.E. on Jan. 16th (DCL).
- S Walton Res., four flying E. on Feb. 26th (PBL, CMP, CAWR).

78(b) Pink-footed Goose

- E* Hainault Forest lake, 75-80 flying S., calling, on Jan. 28th (MRC, RML).
- S Old Coulsdon, 75-80 flying N., calling, on Feb. 26th (WEB).

75-78 Grey Geese

- E* King George V Res., 70 in flight on Mar. 4th (DK).
- M Inner London : Bethnal Green, a small party, thought to have been White-fronted Geese, flying over, calling, at 19.15 hrs. on Jan. 2nd (WHD)—possibly the party recorded at Black Fen, Kent, the same evening. Hampstead Garden Suburb, nine flying W. at 18.45 hrs. on Mar. 26th (DWT). Staines reservoirs, several observers recorded parties of grey geese on Feb. 26th ; in the following observations the time was given : 14.15. hrs. 22 flying W. ; 16.15. hrs. 12 flew in from W. and settled on King George VI Res., but were mobbed by gulls and flew away to the N.W. ; at 17.00 hrs., 15 flying over ; at 17.45 hrs. at least 12 swimming on King George VI Res. with cormorants ; at least one of the party mobbed by gulls was an adult White-fronted Goose (REE, FHJ, HPM *et al.*).
- S Epsom, a flock of 40 flying N.W. on Feb. 24th (CEB). Richmond Park, 21 flying N.E. over the Pen Ponds on Mar. 18th were thought, from the calls, to be White-fronted Geese (EDB). Walton Res., four on Dec. 23rd (GG). Wimbledon Common, a party flying W. on Feb. 16th (JI). Beddington S.F., 76 flying S.E. on Jan. 12th (RES).
- ### 82 Canada Goose
- S Cobham, a pair bred successfully at Painshill (DP). Godstone, six on Jan. 6th (VAG).

Other records of single birds and parties in Essex, Middlesex and Surrey may be of full-winged birds released in Hyde Park in July and December, 1955, although most of the wanderings of these birds have been local.

84 Mute Swan

See page 58 for the results of the census of Mute Swans 1955 and 1956. In January the sinking of an oil barge at Battersea caused more than 200 Mute Swans (as well as tame Mallard and gulls) to be soaked with oil. A number died, but the majority were returned to the river after cleaning and treatment by the R.S.P.C.A., and P.D.S.A. A still more serious disaster occurred in December, when another barge sank while on tow, also at Battersea. The oil was carried far upstream on the flood tide, and over 800 birds were affected. The R.S.P.C.A., recovered 595 swans between Wapping and Richmond, and the P.D.S.A. a further 208. In all, 243 of these birds are known to have died; the remainder were returned to the river or placed on suitable waters nearby after treatment, and many of them were marked on the back of the neck with gentian violet dye.

85 Whooper Swan

From 1900 to 1955 there were only two records for the London Area.

- E* Fishers Green G.P., 22 on Feb. 26th, two on Mar. 4th, four on Mar. 24th and 25th, and two on Apr. 2nd, 7th and 8th (FB, RJL, DAH, JLFP). Girling Res., three on Feb. 12th (WCD). King George V Res., three on Feb. 12th, two on Mar. 4th; on Apr. 1st, 19 flying S. at 16.10 hrs., and 29 flying N.E. two hours later (DK, JLFP). Walthamstow Res., two flying N. on Mar. 31st (JF).
- H Cheshunt G.P., 11 on Feb. 26th, nine on Mar. 4th (JLFP). Hoddesdon S.F., seven on Feb. 26th (JLFP). Panshanger, 11 on Mar. 11th (BLS).
- M Brent Res., two on Feb. 27th, one on Mar. 6th; an adult and two immatures on Nov. 27th (EHW). King George VI Res., two adults and one immature flying W. on Feb. 5th (JWD, IGJ, BPP, RHMR). Staines Moor, an adult on Feb. 11th (MC).
- K Ruxley G.P., five Feb. 25th to Mar. 1st, and three until Mar. 4th (GWA, EHG, FJH, DCL). North Cray, three on the river Cray Mar. 20th to 24th; the observer states that they had also visited open water at Danson Park and Sidcup Golf Course (GWA).
- S Barn Elms Res., two adults and an immature arrived at 09.45 hrs. and left again, flying W. at 10.50 hrs. (REE, HPM, DWT)—perhaps the birds seen at King George VI Res. the same day. Epsom S.F., one flew over on Mar. 13th (KDE). Gatton Park lake, eight on Feb. 26th (CMA). Island Barn Res., two on Feb. 5th, flew off to the W. (DP). Old Coulsdon, five flying N.E. at 09.00 hrs. on Feb. 5th (WEB).

86 Bewick's Swan

- E* Girling Res., 49 on Feb. 18th, later flew N. after a brief visit to King George V Res. (JLFP). King George V Res., six on Feb. 11th

and 12th, and a different herd of six on Feb. 20th (JLFP). Walthamstow Res., 22 on Apr. 1st (JF).

- H Aldenham Res., an adult on Feb. 13th (EHW). Cheshunt G.P., 25 with Mute and Whooper Swans on Feb. 26th (JLFP). Hilfield Park Res., nine Feb. 9th to 12th, 33 on Apr. 1st, four of which remained until Apr. 20th (GBDC, BLS, ABS, EHW).
- M Brent Res., an immature from Feb. 25th to Mar. 28th (JFd, GBDC, GCG, DWT). Queen Mary Res., two adults on Feb. 5th (HPM, REE). Stoke Newington Res., 13 adults on Feb. 11th (JF).
- K Stone Marshes, an immature on Feb. 26th (FJH, DCL).

85/86 Whooper/Bewick's Swan

- E West Thurrock Marsh, two flying up river on Feb. 25th (RH). King George V Res., 14 flying over on Feb. 7th (PFCR).

91 Buzzard

- M Wood Green, one on Mar. 4th (FJL). Inner London : Regent's Park, one flying N. on Oct. 4th (EHW). Hampstead Heath, one on Sept. 15th (GT).

100/102 Hen/Montagu's Harrier

- M Perry Oaks S.F., on June 10th a ring-tailed Harrier was flushed on three occasions from long grass before flying away to the N. (WHT).

104 Hobby

- E* Walthamstow Res., one on Oct. 3rd (EHW).
- H Old Parkbury G.P., one on Sept. 2nd (DJTH).
- M Harefield, one on July 1st and Aug. 28th (IGJ, BPP). Ponders End S.F., one on Sept. 5th, 6th, 9th and 10th (FR, JLFP). Staines reservoirs, one on Sept. 2nd and 12th (BEC). Perry Oaks S.F., one on Sept. 14th (IRB).
- S One seen on several dates from May to July between Cobham and Effingham Junction (GHF). Epsom S.F., single birds on June 30th, Aug. 7th, Sept. 20th and 30th, Oct. 14th, and two on Oct. 21st (MJC, KDE, AQ).

105 Peregrine

- B One near Denham on Aug. 12th (JWD).
- H Hilfield Park Res., one on Oct. 26th (GBDC).
- M King George VI Res., single birds on Jan. 15th and 30th (MJC, KDE, AQ), and Oct. 20th (HPM). Perry Oaks S.F., one on Feb. 5th (IGJ, BPP), and Sept. 26th (NHP). Inner London : a tiercel perched on crossbars of goal posts in Regent's Park on Jan. 12th (EHW).
- K Blackheath, one on Feb. 28th (RET). Orpington, one on Dec. 24th (EHG).
- S Epsom S.F., one on Mar. 7th (KDE).

107 Merlin

- E* Hainault, one on Jan. 7th (ACP).
 H Hilfield Park Res., one on Mar. 31st (ABS).
 M Perry Oaks S.F., one on Aug. 25th (REE, HPM). Staines reservoirs, two on Apr. 22nd (CMV), and one on Sept. 11th (EHW).
 S Beddington S.F., one on Oct. 18th (BSM). Coulsdon Common, one on Nov. 28th (MDK). Herne Hill, one flying E. on Mar. 24th (HEP). Streatham Common, one flying S.S.W. on Apr. 18th (BPA).
 K Stone Marshes, one on Aug. 7th (WIB).

110 Kestrel

- M Inner London : one young successfully reared at the Imperial Institute, South Kensington (RWH, RET). No proof of nesting elsewhere.

115 Red-legged Partridge

Only additions to the breeding season distribution given in the *L.B.Rs.* for 1954 and 1955 are given.

- B Two pairs near Horton on May 12th (RWW).
 E South Weald, a pair on Apr. 21st (RBW). Romford S.F., two recorded on a number of occasions (RRS).
 H Hilfield Park Res., probably three pairs bred (GBDC). Totteridge, one pair resident (EHW).
 M Hillingdon, two near the station on Apr. 28th (TLB).
 S Beddington S.F., a pair bred for the first time on record (BSM).

120 Water Rail

Frequently recorded during the winter months and passage periods. Pairs summered at London Colney G.P. and Napsbury, but breeding was not proved.

125 Corncrake

- M Northolt Park, one flushed from a railway bank on Apr. 15th (TLB).

126 Moorhen

- S Inner London : one feeding along the Thames tide-line near the Royal Festival Hall on Dec. 3rd (RWH).

127 Coot

- M Inner London : Regent's Park, three pairs nested, two successfully (HCH, EHW *et al.*) ; St. James's Park, 29 pairs bred, of which four pairs built only small nests and probably laid no eggs ; only 12 pairs were known to have hatched young, a total of 40, of which 35 were reared ; four pairs had second broods (sc).
 S Inner London : Battersea Park, four pairs nested (JNAR).

131 Oystercatcher

E* King George V Res., one on July 28th (JLFP). Sewardstone G.P., one in flight on June 28th (JCE). Walthamstow Res., one on Mar. 31st and four on Aug. 4th (JF, RBW). West Thurrock Marsh, two on May 26th (LW).

M Brent Res., one on Feb. 8th (EHW). Mill Hill, one flying over on Sept. 22nd (EHW). Perry Oaks S.F., one on Aug. 4th and 15th (five observers). Staines Res., one on Mar. 31st and Sept. 10th (BEG, IGJ, JWD).

S Molesey S.F., one on July 22nd (DP).

133 Lapwing

S With the commencement of the cold spell, there was a large influx with *c.* 2,000 at Beddington S.F. and 1,200 at Epsom S.F. on Feb. 1st, but these numbers were not maintained. By Feb. 3rd there were *c.* 400 at Beddington and only 40 at Epsom.

134 Ringed Plover

The main spring passage was in May, the maximum at Perry Oaks S.F. being 42 on May 10th and 11th. In autumn the largest numbers appeared in August and early September ; there were *c.* 100 at Perry Oaks S.F. on Aug. 19th and *c.* 60 the same day near the mouth of the river Darent ; the largest numbers on West Thurrock Marsh were 72 on Aug. 30th and 87 on Sept. 4th.

Winter records are largely from the Thames marshes, but at the beginning of the cold spell on Feb. 2nd there were 57 in a flock of *c.* 170 shore waders at Beddington S.F., and four the same day at Epsom S.F.

135 Little Ringed Plover

As in 1955, about 25 pairs spent the summer in the Area ; 15 pairs certainly nested.

E At one locality a pair stayed all summer but no nest was found (BPH). Elsewhere, six pairs were located, at four sites, and five first clutches are known to have hatched ; one pair laid a second clutch after successfully fledging its first young (JLFP).

H At least ten pairs summered, mostly at gravel pits, and seven pairs are known to have nested ; nine chicks were ringed (many observers).

M At least five pairs were located in the county but only one nest was found—the eggs from this were later reported to have been stolen. The new site where two pairs were present in 1955 (see *L.B.R.*, 20, p. 16) was flooded and unsuitable. One to five were seen at Perry Oaks S.F. from Mar. 30th to Oct. 3rd and up to five birds were seen also at Waltham Cross S.F. on passage in April, May, July and August (many observers).

K Two were seen in May at the original gravel pit but there was no evidence of nesting (FJH). A pair bred at a site in North Kent (*per*

EHG) and at another locality two to five were present from April to June and again in August but no nest was found (WIB).

- S A pair laid eggs at a gravel pit but they were destroyed (probably by a rodent) and the birds left (DP). Single birds were seen at Epsom S.F. in April and July and at Beddington S.F. on Aug. 5th (KDE, BSM *et al.*)

139 Grey Plover

- E* Romford S.F., one on Dec. 31st (RRS).
 H Old Parkbury, one on Sept. 14th (EHW).
 M Mill Hill, one flying N.W., calling, on Oct. 20th (EHW). Perry Oaks S.F., one on Mar. 22nd (NHP), five on Oct. 7th and seven on the 28th (BEC, REE, SG, HPM). Staines Res., three on May 20th (RWW).
 S Beddington S.F., one or two from Feb. 22nd to 26th and one on Mar. 25th and 26th (BPA, BSM, RES). Epsom S.F., one on Oct. 6th (JC)

140 Golden Plover

The larger flocks and a record for Inner London are given.

- E* Marks Gate, near Romford, *c.* 250 on Dec. 21st (BD).
 H Hoddesdon S.F., *c.* 350 on Jan. 1st and 15th (JLFP). London Colney-Shenleybury, 100-150 from the beginning of the year to the end of March (GBDC, DJTH, EHW).
 M Inner London: Regent's Park, a party of six flying about over and alighting on playing fields in fog on Sept. 20th; they were extremely nervous and called continually (HCH).

143 Turnstone

- E* King George V Res., one on May 21st (DK). Walthamstow Res., one flying S. on Aug. 4th; one on Oct. 3rd (RBW, EHW).
 H Hilfield Park Res., one on May 19th (ABS).
 M Perry Oaks S.F., one or two May 5th to 8th; one July 28th, seven Aug. 11th, two Sept. 16th, one Oct. 6th (many observers). Staines reservoirs, up to three May 6th to 13th; one Aug. 19th, two Sept. 11th and 12th and one Sept. 16th (ten observers).
 K Stone Marshes, single birds on Aug. 5th, 7th and 20th (WIB, KHP).
 S Beddington S.F., two on Feb. 2nd (BSM).

145 Snipe

Breeding season records and large flocks only are given.

- E* Sewardstone G.P., one or two pairs throughout the summer (JLFP).
 H Hoddesdon S.F., up to 10 birds drumming at once between Mar. 25th and the end of May but no evidence of breeding (JLFP).
 M. Perry Oaks S.F., *c.* 200 in January (DJB, PLB, BPP, NFS); 100 on Dec. 27th (CAW). Staines Moor, four pairs bred and another present (HPM); *c.* 100 on Oct. 20th (HPM).
 S Beddington S.F., the large numbers reported at the end of 1955 remained into January with *c.* 1,000 on the 8th; subsequently numbers fell rapidly to 350 on the 22nd; during the cold spell in February

c. 500 were present and the numbers decreased as the weather improved ; two pairs bred ; in November and December the numbers again built up and there was a maximum of *c.* 550 on Dec. 26th (BPA, BSM, RES *et al.*). Epsom S.F., *c.* 200 in January and early February ; *c.* 300 in December (MJC, KDE, AQ).

147 Jack Snipe

Many reports of small numbers. Records of 10 or more are given.

- E* Romford S.F., a maximum of 20+ on Nov. 23rd (RRS).
 H Hoddesdon S.F., numbers normally over 10 in January and March with a maximum of 16 on Jan. 1st (JLFP).
 S Beddington S.F., up to 26 in January and the first half of February, 39 on Feb. 18th and 57 on the 26th ; up to 17 remained until Mar. 18th and the last was seen on Apr. 22nd ; one on Aug. 20th, up to seven Oct. 7th to Dec. 31st (BPA, WEB, BSM, RES). Epsom S.F., up to 26 in January and the beginning of February, 73 on Feb. 11th ; thereafter the numbers fell and the last seen was on May 3rd ; first seen in the autumn on Oct. 6th, and the maximum reached on Dec. 26th was *c.* 32 (MJC, KDE, AQ). Hersham S.F., up to 20 in November and December (DP).

148 Woodcock

Records in the breeding season and for Inner London only are given.

- E* Warley, one roding on May 28th (MSF, RHN).
 M Inner London : one picked up alive in Red Lion Square, W.C.1, on Nov. 1st (R.S.P.C.A.).
 S Bookham Common, one roding on May 12th and 13th (RET, WGT). Esher Common, present in May and June (JCSF). Princes Coverts, three on May 19th (PRC). Mickleham, one roding at Juniper Top on June 28th (GMC). Inner London : one found in Fort Road, S.E.1, was taken to St. James's Park by the P.D.S.A.—it was reported as having been brought down by a rocket on Nov. 5th.

150 Curlew

Recorded in all seasons of the year, but most frequent in the spring and autumn passage. There was an exceptional influx at the commencement of the cold spell, when 54 appeared at Beddington S.F. on Jan. 31st and Feb. 1st. On the 2nd there were 12 and by the 4th only one remained.

151 Whimbrel

- E *Fishers Green G.P., one on Apr. 22nd (FB, RJL). *Girling Res., four flying S. on July 28th ; two on Sept. 2nd (JCE, JLFP). *Walthamstow Res., single birds on May 7th and Aug. 4th (JF, RBW). West, Thurrock Marsh, one on May 5th and two on July 30th (RH).
 H Hoddesdon S.F., one on Apr. 22nd (JLFP).

M Perry Oaks S.F., up to six from May 11th to 20th ; single birds on Aug. 4th and 23rd (many observers). Southall, one on May 14th (CAW). Staines Res., one on May 5th and 12th (REE, RWW).

S Beddington S.F., one on Aug. 14th (BSM). Epsom S.F., one on Apr. 19th, five on Aug. 28th (KDE).

154 Black-tailed Godwit

M Feltham G.P., one on Apr. 11th and 20th (PWPB, ART). Perry Oaks S.F., one on many dates from Mar. 25th to Apr. 28th ; two on Apr. 15th and 16th (many observers).

155 Bar-tailed Godwit

M Perry Oaks S.F., two on May 6th (REE). Queen Mary Res., 15-20 on Feb. 25th (JSC).

S Beddington S.F., one from Feb. 2nd to 8th (BPA, BSM, RES, *et al.*).

154/155 Godwit (species not identified)

H Maple Cross, two flying S.W. on June 23rd were too high for specific identification (NHP).

156 Green Sandpiper

Recorded in every month of the year, but most frequent on autumn passage. There were 24+ at *Rainham Marsh on Aug. 10th, 12 at Hoddesdon S.F. on July 29th and a similar number at Esher S.F., on Aug. 11th.

157 Wood Sandpiper

E* Romford S.F., one July 14th, three on the 15th, four on 20th and 21st and two on the 29th ; one on Aug. 4th, 5th and 6th, and three on Sept. 2nd (RRS).

H Hilfield Park Res., one on Apr. 28th, two on May 6th (GBDC, ABS). Hoddesdon S.F., one on July 22nd (JLFP). Old Parkbury, one on Apr. 29th (GBDC). Waltham Cross S.F., one on May 20th (DK).

M Perry Oaks S.F., one May 2nd and 4th, up to five May 19th to 21st ; 12 on July 15th, one on Aug. 1st, up to four Aug. 12th to Sept. 9th, one on Sept. 20th, Oct. 21st and 24th (many observers). Ponders End S.F., up to three, Sept. 1st to 12th (FR, JLFP). Stanwellmoor G.P., three on May 20th (MJC, KDE, AQ).

K Stone, one on May 23rd (FJH).

S Barn Elms Res., one on June 10th (MC). Beddington S.F., up to three July 17th to 21st, one Aug. 29th, two Sept. 2nd and 22nd (BPA, GJH, BSM, RES). Epsom S.F., two on May 16th, one on the 19th (seven observers). Esher S.F., one on July 15th (DP). Hersham, one on July 15th (DP). Walton G.P., one on May 19th (CMP).

159 Common Sandpiper

Spring passage from Apr. 15th to May 29th ; autumn passage from

July 20th to Oct. 20th with stragglers in November. Other records are given below.

- H Old Parkbury G.P., a pair was present from April to July, but there was no proof of nesting (GBDC, EHW).
- M Staines Res., one on several dates from Jan. 8th to 21st (six observers).
- K Dartford, two by the river Darent on Feb. 1st and one on the 27th (WIB).

161 Redshank

Breeding season, and winter records other than for the Thames marshes, are given.

- E *Fishers Green G.P., one pair, *Sewardstone G.P., one pair, West Thurrock Marsh, three pairs (RH, JLFP).
- M Staines Moor, single birds on Feb. 5th and 12th (CAW) ; four in May and June (HPM).
- K Dartford, river Darent, at least six pairs, Stone, 7-8 pairs, Swanscombe, many pairs (WIB).
- S Beddington S.F., five on Feb. 1st and one on the 3rd ; eight pairs bred (BPA, BSM *et al.*). Epsom S.F., one on Feb. 2nd ; two pairs, one of which bred successfully (six observers). Hammersmith, one by the Thames on Feb. 4th (MC, DJTH, JI). Putney, two by the Thames on Dec. 4th (LF). Walton G.P., two on Feb. 6th (NFS).

162 Spotted Redshank

- E* Romford S.F., eight on Sept. 1st and 2nd (RRS).
- M Perry Oaks S.F., single birds on Aug. 26th, Sept. 1st and 11th (nine observers).
- K Stone Marshes, four Nov. 25th, three Dec. 3rd and two Dec. 8th (WIB).
- S Epsom S.F., one on July 21st (MJC, KDE, AQ).

165 Greenshank

- E Autumn passage was from July 22nd to Nov. 11th with the peak at the end of August and early in September ; the largest flock was ten at Perry Oaks S.F. on Aug. 29th (EHW). All spring records are given below.
- E Rainham Marsh, two on May 5th (BPH). West Thurrock Marsh, one on May 19th (RH).
- H Old Parkbury G.P., one on Apr. 29th (EHW).
- S Richmond Park, one on May 27th (EDB).

169 Knot

- E *Girling Res., one on Sept. 2nd (JCE). *King George V Res., one on Feb. 11th and Mar. 30th (JLFP). West Thurrock Marshes, one on Apr. 11th ; one Sept. 23rd and two Dec. 24th (RH).

- M Perry Oaks S.F., one on June 13th (REE) ; one from Aug. 29th to Sept. 8th (eight observers). Queen Mary Res., three on Feb. 11th (CMV).
- K Ruxley G.P., one on Sept. 1st (DCL). Stone, *c.* 20 on Feb. 4th, one Apr. 9th (WIB, FJH).
- S Beddington S.F., 23 on Feb. 2nd (BSM). Epsom S.F., one on Feb. 2nd and 11th (MJC). Barn Elms Res., one Sept. 1st to 3rd (five observers).

170 Purple Sandpiper

- S One at Beddington S.F. with Knot and Dunlin on Feb. 2nd (BSM). It was very confiding and allowed the observer to approach within a few feet. There are three previous records of this species since 1900, all at concrete embanked reservoirs.

171 Little Stint

- E* Girling Res., two on Sept. 9th (JLFP). West Thurrock Marsh, single birds on Aug. 16th and Sept. 16th (RH).
- H Hilfield Park Res., one on May 16th (EHW).
- M Feltham G.P., one on June 1st (PWPB, ART). Perry Oaks S.F., in spring one from May 17th to 20th and one June 17th and 20th (six observers) ; autumn passage from Aug. 4th to Nov. 11th but numbers exceeded two only in September, when there were up to six from the 1st to 6th, 10 on the 7th, falling to two by the 13th, 13 on the 22nd and 23rd falling to four on the 30th (many observers). Ponders End S.F., 2-4 between Sept. 2nd and 9th (DAH, JLFP, FR).
- K Stone Marshes, one on Apr. 9th ; 1-4 on four dates Sept. 11th to 20th, one Nov. 4th (JKG, WIB).

176 Pectoral Sandpiper

- S One at Epsom S.F., on Sept. 19th and 20th (KDE). Satisfactory details have been received.

178 Dunlin

Spring passage from March to early June, maximum 43+ at Perry Oaks S.F. on Apr. 15th (MJC, KDE, AQ) ; autumn passage from mid-July to early November, maximum 36 at Perry Oaks on Aug. 19th (MJC, KDE, AQ).

In winter small flocks occur with some frequency on the Thames marshes, and occasional birds or small parties elsewhere. During the cold spell in February, however, there were reports from fourteen localities away from the Thames marshes, the largest flocks being at Beddington S.F., 22 on Feb. 4th and 17 on the 5th, and at Barn Elms Res., 14 on Feb. 11th. By the Thames at West Thurrock Marsh there were 81 on Feb. 26th, 130 on Dec. 11th, and 110 on Dec. 31st.

179 Curlew Sandpiper

- E* West Thurrock Marsh, four on Sept. 4th, five on the 5th, two on the 23rd and 30th (RH).

- M Perry Oaks S.F., single birds on four dates from July 19th to Aug. 18th, 2-4 Aug. 26th to 30th, larger numbers from Sept. 1st to 6th with a peak of 11 on the 6th, 1-3 on many dates from Sept. 8th to Oct. 28th (many observers). Ponders End S.F., up to four from Sept. 2nd to 10th (FR, JLFP).
- K Stone Marshes, four on Sept. 14th (WIB).

181 Sanderling

- E* Girling Res., two on Feb. 5th (JLFP). King George V Res., one on Feb. 5th and Apr. 15th, four on May 20th, one Sept. 12th (JCE, DAH, JLFP). West Thurrock Marsh, one on Feb. 11th and 12th, five on Feb. 26th (MJE, RH).
- H Hilfield Park Res., one Apr. 15th, two May 21st to 24th, one May 27th (GBDC, BLS).
- M Ashford G.P., one on May 13th (PWPB, ART). Perry Oaks S.F., up to eight on several dates from May 5th to 26th ; one July 22nd and Aug. 4th, two Aug. 6th, one Aug. 11th and 29th and Sept. 4th (many observers). Queen Mary Res., one Feb. 4th and 5th (RCH, HPM, CMV). Ponders End S.F., one Sept. 4th (FR). Staines Res., one on Apr. 22nd and May 5th, four on May 20th (MJC, REE, MDK, AQ).
- K Dartford, one by the River Darent on Feb. 1st (WIB). Stone, two on May 19th (FJH).
- S Beddington S.F., five on Feb. 2nd, four on the 4th, then one until the 27th (BPA, WEB, BSM, RES).

184 Ruff

Formerly only a double passage migrant with winter records very exceptional. Over the last three years, however, there is evidence of a change of status.

In the winter 1954/55 2-3 birds were present at Perry Oaks S.F. from the end of the autumn passage until an influx at the end of January. In 1955/56 up to 20 wintered there and the peak of the spring passage on Apr. 7th was only 30. In 1956 at West Thurrock Marsh there were six on Jan. 21st, two on Nov. 5th, one on the 19th, seven on Dec. 24th and one on the 31st.

During the last three years, there have also been several winter occurrences coinciding with severe weather. In 1956 there were records in February from Barn Elms Res., Beddington S.F., Queen Mary Res., and Stone Marshes. The records at Queen Mary Res. may be accounted for by the wintering flock at Perry Oaks.

The peak of the spring passage at Perry Oaks has already been mentioned ; elsewhere only single birds were noted at two localities. The autumn passage was more marked, but the maximum at Perry Oaks was only 20 on Sept. 6th, and elsewhere seven at *Romford S.F. on Aug. 26th was the highest number reported. Eighteen were present at Perry Oaks on Dec. 16th.

185 Avocet

- E* One at West Thurrock Marsh on Apr. 4th, and one at Walthamstow Res. on Apr. 14th (MJE, JF).

189 Stone Curlew

- M Perry Oaks S.F., one on Sept. 23rd (RSRF, RSH, SK).
 S Barn Elms Res., one flying low over the water on Dec. 27th (HFG, CMV). Satisfactory details have been received of this occurrence on an unusual date.

193 Arctic Skua

- H A dark phase adult flying N. at Old Parkbury G.P., on June 10th ; elongated central tail feathers and white wing patches were noted (GBDC, RC, SC, DJTH).

198 Greater Black-backed Gull

- M Inner London : St. James's Park, an immature, first seen in December, 1955, remained in the Park until at least Apr. 12th (WGT).
 S One found dead at Walton Res., on Feb. 25th had been ringed as young on June 26th, 1955, at Rott, near Stavanger, Norway (CMP).

199 Lesser Black-backed Gull

The autumn passage was very heavy ; details of some large roosting flocks are given below. Unusual numbers at Beddington S.F. during the winter are also given.

- E* Girling Res., 7,600 on Aug. 20th, 7,000 on Aug. 22nd, 4,224 on Sept. 30th, 3,855 on Oct. 21st ; 90% arrived from the S.S.E. or S.E. and were thought to be birds which fed by day on the Thames marshes (JLFP).
 S Island Barn Res., 1,200 on Aug. 22nd, 3,000 on Sept. 6th, 2,000 on Sept. 30th (DP). Beddington S.F., 20-30 daily from January to March, and occasionally up to 100 in January and February ; 250 on Mar. 22nd (BSM).

201 Common Gull

- S One found dead at Barn Elms Res. on Jan. 15th had been ringed as young at Heiligenhafen, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, on July 9th, 1955.

202 Glaucous Gull

- E* Girling Res., an immature with Herring Gulls on Feb. 11th (JLFP).
 H Hilfield Park Res., an adult on Jan. 8th, an adult and an immature on Jan. 22nd and 24th, and an immature only on Jan. 23rd (GBDC, ABS).
 S Beddington S.F., immatures on Jan. 9th and Feb. 4th (BSM, RES).

203 Iceland Gull

- S Beddington S.F., an adult seen on Feb. 18th by BSM was almost identical in size with accompanying Lesser Black-backed Gulls and

had a slim head and neck in contrast to the massive head and neck of the Glaucous Gull which the observer had seen in January, and the flight was more agile, with quicker wingbeats ; a detailed description has been received.

207 Little Gull

- E* King George V Res., two immatures on Aug. 22nd, one on Sept. 2nd and 6th (DAH, JLFP, FR). Walthamstow Res., an immature on Sept. 1st and 22nd (JF, EHV).
- M Perry Oaks S.F., two immatures from Sept. 9th to 11th (seven observers). Staines Res., immature birds on Sept. 8th and 28th (JWD, HPM, NHP).
- S Barn Elms Res., an immature on Sept. 12th (JFWB, JI).

208 Black-headed Gull

Five recoveries of birds ringed abroad, and one recovery abroad are given below :

<i>Ringed</i>	<i>Recovered</i>
21.6.53, Syrjasaari, Central Finland, as young.	8.1.56, Chingford, Essex, found dead.
20.3.55, Prague, as adult	14.2.56, Battersea, found dead.
22.6.55, Babiti Lake, near Riga, as young	14.2.56, Grays, Essex, found dead.
23.6.55, Pukhtu, Estonia, as young	9.3.56, Molesey Res., Surrey, caught and released.
6.6.55, Lake Mierde, North Brabant, Holland, as young	18.3.56, Barn Elms Res., Surrey, found dead.
28.2.52, St. James's Park, as adult	17.4.55, Wroclaw, Poland.

The number of nests at Perry Oaks S.F. was not counted this year.

211 Kittiwake

- E* Girling Res., two found dead on Feb. 26th (JLFP). King George V Res., one on Feb. 4th was found dead on the following day ; another dead on Mar. 3rd (JLFP) ; a flock of 34 adults and immatures seen, and heard calling, on Mar. 4th, is the largest number reported since the early years of this century (JCE, DK). Walthamstow Res., an immature found dead on Nov. 25th (WCD).
- H Hilfield Park Res., an adult on Jan. 8th (ABS), and immatures on Jan. 14th and July 31st (BLS).
- M King George VI Res., an immature on Sept. 22nd (GCG). Staines Res., an adult on June 24th (HPM).
- S Barn Elms Res., an immature on Mar. 14th (JI).

212 Black Tern

Six records only for the spring passage, all during the period May 5th to 28th, with a maximum of 14 at *King George V Res. on May 22nd ; reported much more frequently during the autumn passage from

July 26th to Oct. 15th with a maximum of 53 at *King George V Res. on Aug. 11th.

217/8 Common/Arctic Tern

Spring passage from Apr. 15th to the end of June, with a maximum of 27 at King George V Res., on the late date of June 25th ; autumn passage from July 8th to Oct. 21st, the largest number being a compact group of between 60 and 70 flying south on Aug. 19th at Staines Res.

222 Little Tern

K Ruxley G.P., one on Aug. 13th, two on the 17th and one on the 19th (DCL).

223 Sandwich Tern

E *Walthamstow Res., two on Aug. 22nd, three on Sept. 1st (JF, FRT). West Thurrock marsh, two on Sept. 9th (RH).

H Hilfield Park Res., six on Sept. 2nd (BLS).

M Ashford G.P., one on May 21st (RWW). Ruislip, two flying S. on Aug. 27th (NHP). Staines reservoirs, one or two on a number of dates from Aug. 6th to Oct. 3rd (many observers).

K Stone Marshes, two on May 28th (WIB).

224 Razorbill

M One found dead in the ice at the Savehay G.P., near Denham, on Feb. 5th (TLB).

230 Puffin

M Staines Res., an immature on Sept. 12th (PRC, BEC, SG, NHP). King George VI Res., an immature on Oct. 7th (REE, HPM *et al.*).

234 Woodpigeon

M Inner London : fewer nests on buildings were reported than usual, but two at South Kensington deserve mention, one at a height of *c.* 80 feet on the front of the British Museum (Natural History) and another at 190 feet (measured) on the W. tower of the Imperial Institute (DG, RWH, RET).

241 Barn Owl

The only proved breeding was at Osterley Park, Middlesex. FRM, RET and WGT were shown an elm which had been blown down in a gale on July 28th/29th. A Barn Owl had been released from the hollow trunk in which it had been trapped. A dead chick a day or so old, a partly incubated egg, and several Barn Owl feathers were found in the hollow trunk.

247 Tawny Owl

M Inner London : Bloomsbury, a pair bred successfully in Queen Square (sc).

248 Long-eared Owl

H Hadley Wood, one from Nov. 13th to 15th in a small group of conifers and hollies (GBDC). Well End, a pair on May 30th ; the ear tufts were visible on one bird (EHW).

249 Short-eared Owl

- E* West Thurrock marsh, one on Apr. 23rd (RH).
 M Perry Oaks S.F., one mobbed by Black-headed Gulls on Mar. 29th (RWW).
 S Beddington S.F., and Mitcham Common, one from Nov. 11th to 21st (BSM).

252 Nightjar

- E* Epping Forest, a pair near Wake Arms in June (WCD, JF, DAH). Thorndon Park, a pair bred, and another male heard in the vicinity ; a male heard at Warley may have been a different bird (DF, MSF, RH, RHN, BPH).
 M Greenford, one on passage on May 14th (JA).
 K Darenth Wood, two heard on May 21st (WIB). Shoreham, single birds in the area of Badger's Mount and Timberden Bottom on June 7th and 17th (FJH, DCL).
 S Esher Common, two heard in the Black Pond area in May and June (JCSF). Mickleham, heard at Juniper Top on several dates in May and June (GMC). Oxshott, between five and seven heard in May, and three on June 24th (PRC, BEC, JCSF). Richmond Park, one heard on May 22nd (BAM).

255 Swift

- S West Ewell, on Aug. 1st MJC saw a Swift make about thirty attempts to settle on dead branches near the top of an elm tree before contriving to remain on a thin branch ; it perched across the branch then moved round until its body was vertical ; it remained thus until it was too dark to see it. Of some 600 Swifts trapped at West Ewell and Epsom S.F., 28 had been previously ringed, mostly in the same area (MJC, KDE, AQ).

261 Hoopoe

- E* Upminster Common, one c. Apr. 20th (ATC).
 S Epsom S.F., one on May 19th and 20th (MJC, KDE). Kingswood, one on May 28th and 29th (KDE).

263 Great Spotted Woodpecker

- M Inner London : Kensington Gardens, one pair nested, and a young bird which fell from the nest was successfully reared by AMW (TG, CHH, CHFP, AMW).

265 Wryneck

E* Weald Park, one on Aug. 7th (RH).

S Banstead Downs, one calling on May 13th (DAC). Chessington, one on Apr. 22nd (KDE, AQ). Coulsdon, a pair present from April to June (WEB, VAG, HPM). Ewell, one on Aug. 13th (AQ). Purley, one calling on May 27th (HB).

271 Woodlark

In 1950 it was estimated that there were 45 pairs in our area. Reports for 1956 suggest that there has been a considerable decrease in numbers. All records for the breeding season are given.

E* Epping Forest, three pairs located (JCE, JLFP). Hainault Forest, three pairs on Apr. 10th, and a nest found on May 6th (ACP, APS).

H Hadley Wood, one or two from July 4th to 9th (GBDC).

M Bushy Park, 1-3 up to July 23rd (EMG). Ruislip, present up to Apr. 21st on the common ; a singing male near Mad Bess Wood on May 20th (TLB, BPP). Stanmore Common and Bentley Priory, two or three April to June (GBDC, EHW).

S Addington Golf Course, one singing on Apr. 2nd (ADB). Headley Heath, a pair on May 13th (HB, PLB, DJB). Richmond Park, three singing males (EDB). Walton G.P., one on May 20th (BEC). Inner London : Battersea Park, a flock of eight on the football pitches during hard weather from Feb. 19th to 27th (JNAR). This is the third record for Inner London.

272 Skylark

Some evidence of a widespread movement on Oct. 27th is given below :—

E* Sewardstone area, *c.* 300 flying N.W. between 08.00 and 13.00 hrs. ; Fishers Green, *c.* 30 flying W.N.W. at 15.00 hrs. (JLFP). Harold Wood, a big movement between 07.45 and 12.30 hrs. ; direction between N. and W., but mostly N.W. ; size of parties mostly three or under and none more than eight (RBW).

M Small parties of up to 15 flying N.W. across Staines Res., at intervals of from 5 to 10 minutes between 10.50 and 11.50 hrs. ; and at longer intervals across King George VI Res. between 13.00 and 15.50 hrs. (CMV).

S Epsom S.F., *c.* 1000 flying N.W.

M/S The hard weather in February resulted in the appearance of flocks in Inner London. The largest numbers were 90+ in Regent's Park, Middx., on Feb. 25th (HCH), and *c.* 40 in Battersea Park on Feb. 4th (JNAR).

274 Swallow

During 1956 there were seven recoveries of birds ringed as nestlings in the London Area in previous years, as follows :

<i>Ringed</i>		<i>Recovered</i>	
10.7.54	Havering, Essex	28.8.56	Hainault, Essex.
10.7.55	Aveley, Essex	28.8.56	Hainault, Essex.
28.7.55	East Bedfont, Middx.	7.4.56	East Hoathley, Sussex.
10.8.55	South Ockenden, Essex	—1.56	Parys, Orange Free State, South Africa.
20.8.55	Navestock, Essex	2.6.56	Stapleford Abbotts, Essex.
23.8.55	Longford, Middx.	28.8.56	Burston, Diss, Norfolk.
1.9.55	Longford, Middx.	10.7.56	Laleham, Middx.

278 Golden Oriole

S An immature male heard singing, and seen in the tops of willows, at Watermeads, Morden, on June 21st (RWV). Satisfactory details have been received.

281 Hooded Crow

H Totteridge, two from Jan. 1st to 8th (GBDC).
 M Perry Oaks S.F., one in flight on Nov. 4th (REE, HPM).
 S Ham Common, one on Jan. 24th (SG).

283 Jackdaw

M Inner London : Kensington Gardens, birds still present, but no sign of breeding.

286 Jay

M/S Inner London : few nests reported, but breeding season records received from Battersea Park, Holland Park, Hyde Park, Notting Hill, Regent's Park and South Kensington. In the St. James's Park area the species is less common than it was : there is only a spring record, Apr. 9th. On Apr. 12th WGT saw two on top of Lollards' Tower, Lambeth Palace.

293 Willow Tit

Recorded in the breeding season from the following :

E* Epping Forest and Weald Park.
 H Cuffley Great Park and Rickmansworth.
 M Mill Hill, a pair bred at Scratch Wood (EHW) ; Ruislip, at least two pairs bred in Copse Wood (DWB, BPP) ; Stanwell, a family party seen in Spout Wood (AQ) ; Harefield, two, possibly three pairs, at Knights-cote Farm (BPP) ; Stanmore Common.
 S Bookham Common, Selsdon Wood and Walton Heath.

298 Treecreeper

M Inner London : Holland Park, one Nov. 25th (EPB). There was again no record for Kensington Gardens, its former breeding haunt in Inner London.

302 Fieldfare

One ringed as young on 21st June, 1955, at Egersund, Rogaland, Norway, was found dead at Goff's Oak, Herts, on 24th March, 1956.

303 Song Thrush

M Inner London : an adult ringed by WGT in St. James's Park on 1st March, 1955, was found dead on 24th June, 1956, at Fakenham, Norfolk, 98 miles, N.N.E.

There were two overseas recoveries of ringed birds :

One ringed at Hainault on 8th Oct., 1955, was recovered at Dionvilleles-Bains, Manche, France, in March, 1956. A nestling ringed at Shenfield on Apr. 28th, 1955, was recovered at Oviedo, Asturias, Spain, on Apr. 21st, 1956.

304 Redwing

During the period Oct. 1st to Dec. 31st, HAB made twelve all-night watches at weekly intervals, and thirty checks between 22.30 and midnight, 02.00 and 04.00 hrs., and 05.30 and 07.00 hrs. at London Airport, Middx. Redwings were heard in greatest numbers between 02.00 and 04.00 hrs., 70% ; 14% were heard between 22.30 and midnight, and 16% between 05.30 and 07.00 hrs.

E Sewardstone, *c.* 500 flying N.W. during the morning on Oct. 27th (JLFP).

S Epsom S.F., *c.* 1,000 passed over in the early morning on Oct. 27th (MJC, KDE, AQ).

One ringed at Worcester Park, Surrey, on Feb. 18th, 1956, was recovered near Preetzen, Mecklenburg, Germany, on Apr. 27th, 1956.

307 Ring Ouzel

M King George VI Res., a male on Apr. 1st (PRC, BEC). Inner London : a male on Apr. 23rd in Regent's Park (HCH).

S Addington, a male on Mar. 30th (ADB).

311 Wheatear

Spring passage from Mar. 10th to May 20th ; autumn passage from Aug. 10th to Oct. 21st.

317 Stonechat

One at Stone, Kent, on June 9th is the only summer record.

318 Whinchat

Breeding season distribution :

E Fishers Green, three pairs, Nazeing G.P., two pairs, Sewardstone, one pair (JLFP).

H Broxbourne G.P., two pairs ; Cheshunt, one pair (JLFP) ; Croxley Green, one pair (JDM) ; Hatfield, one pair (AFM) ; Hoddesdon S.F., three pairs (JLFP) ; Hilfield Park Res., one pair (GBDC).

- M Harefield Moor, one pair (IGJ, BPP) ; Mill Hill, one pair (EHV) ; Staines reservoirs, one pair (PRC).
 K Crayford marshes, six pairs (JKG) ; Stone, one pair (WIB).
 S Walton G.P., one pair (DP).

320 Redstart

Breeding season distribution :

- E *Epping Forest, present but no estimate of the number of pairs received ; Warley, one pair (GAP, RBW) ; *Weald Park, three pairs (MSF).
 H Cuffey Great Wood, ten pairs (BLS) ; Hatfield Park, four pairs (AFM).
 M Harefield Moor, several present in May and June (IGJ) ; Trent Park, three pairs (BSMS, TRL).
 S Ashted Forest, one pair (SK) ; Richmond Park, five pairs (EDB, VFH).

321 Black Redstart

Extensive clearance of the City bombed sites, the stronghold of this species in the London Area, has greatly reduced the suitable habitat. Nevertheless, at least six singing males were located, and four pairs were present during the nesting season ; only one pair was proved to have nested successfully (PHFB, ABMM, RBW).

The lack of suitable habitat in Inner London may have accounted for records in March and April in Middx. at the Staines reservoirs, the Colne valley near Denham, Hampstead Heath, and Mill Hill, and in Surrey at Barn Elms Res., Epsom S.F., Beddington S.F., and Croydon New Power Station. Four pairs remained to breed at the power station, and an unmated male frequented a hedge on Beddington S.F. throughout June (BPA, BSM, RES *et al.*). At Vauxhall in Inner London, one was singing from a ledge of a tall warehouse at the goods depot in Nine Elms Lane on May 27th (JRL).

A nestling ringed at Cripplegate, Inner London, on June 10th, 1955, was recovered at Douarnenez, Finistere, France, on Mar. 10th, 1956.

322 Nightingale

- M Inner London : Regent's Park, one on Apr. 16th (HCH).

327 Grasshopper Warbler

- H Whippendall Woods, one singing on Apr. 30th and May 4th (JDM). London Colney, one singing on Aug. 14th (GBDC).
 M Brent Res., single birds on May 18th and Sept. 11th (EHV). Staines, one singing on June 19th (wss). West Hyde, one on May 20th and 25th (TLB).
 S Bookham Common, three or four singing males in May and June (GB, DAR, RET, WGT). Oxshott, at least seven singing males in May and June at Princes Coverts (PRC, BEC, JCSF). Surbiton, one singing on several dates in June (ABMM).

343 Blackcap

E* Brentwood, a male visited a bird table regularly from Feb. 8th until the end of the month (GAW, WJW *et al.*).

347 Whitethroat

M Inner London : Regent's Park, a pair attempted to nest in a locality occupied by a breeding pair in 1953, but were disturbed (HCH, EHW).

354 Willow Warbler

M Inner London : Regent's Park, a pair occupied territory but no young were seen (HCH, EHW).

357 Wood Warbler

E* Epping Forest, three singing males in the High Beech area (JCE, DAH, JLFP). Warley, two pairs (MSF).

H Hadley Woods, one pair bred (GBDC). Cuffley Great Wood, single birds on May 13th and June 3rd (BLS).

M Harrow Weald Common, three pairs bred (EHW). Stanmore Common, one pair (EHW).

S Bred at Banstead Heath, one pair (HB), and Wimbledon Common, two pairs (SK). Pairs or singing males were also present in the breeding season at Esher Common, Gatton Park, Kingswood, and Oxshott.

365 Firecrest

M Hampstead Heath, one on Apr. 8th (GT).

S Beddington S.F., one on Nov. 13th and three on the 15th (BSM). Dulwich Woods, a male on Jan. 8th (IRB). Richmond Park, one on Apr. 2nd (VFH). Selsdon Wood, one on Mar. 31st and Apr. 2nd (HEP).

Satisfactory details have been received in respect of the above records.

368 Pied Flycatcher

E* Hainault, one on Sept. 8th (BD).

H Hatfield, one on Sept. 16th (AFM). Hilfield Park Res., several on Aug. 28th (EHW).

M Brent Res., one on Aug. 20th (EHW). Cranford Park, one on Sept. 20th (BWC). Hampstead Heath, single birds on several dates from Aug. 15th to Sept. 8th (GT). Mill Hill, one on Sept. 9th (EHW). Stanwell, one on Sept. 10th (BEC). Inner London : single birds were reported as follows : Kensington Gardens, Sept. 8th ; Regent's Park, Sept. 10th and 18th ; St. James's Park, Sept. 10th and 11th (DG, ABMM, WGT, EHW).

K Greenwich Park, one on Sept. 8th (REG, WGT). Slades Green marshes, one on Oct. 7th (JKG).

S Barn Elms Res., one or two on several dates from Aug. 24th to Sept. 14th (JFWB, SK, HPM). Beddington S.F., one on Aug. 14th and

15th (BSM). Dulwich Woods, one on Nov. 4th (IRB). Epsom Downs, two on Aug. 28th (KDE). Forest Hill, one on Sept. 17th (DBF). Morden, a female on May 10th (RWW). Richmond Park, one on Sept. 3rd (BEC). Sanderstead, one on Sept. 13th (AJH).

374 Richard's Pipit

M One on the causeway of Staines Res. on Apr. 10th (BC), and 21st (CMV). Full details will be published in *British Birds*.

379(a) Rock Pipit

All records, other than for the Thames marshes, are given.

E* King George V Res., two on Apr. 7th and 8th (JLFP).

H Hilfield Park Res., one on Feb. 1st (ABS).

M King George VI Res., two on Oct. 7th, three on Oct. 21st and 28th (HPM). Perry Oaks S.F., one on Oct. 7th (HPM).

S Beddington S.F., three on Oct. 20th and five on the 21st (BSM, RES, GJH). Epsom S.F., single birds on Feb. 3rd, Mar. 29th and 30th, and Sept. 30th (MJC, KDE, AQ). Walton Res., two on Mar. 10th (NFS).

379(b) Water Pipit

M Harefield Moor, one on Mar. 25th (JWD, BPP, RHMR). Queen Mary Res., one on Mar. 18th (JWD, BPP).

S Beddington S.F., one on Apr. 2nd and 3rd (GJH, BSM, RES). Barn Elms Res., four on Mar. 27th (JI).

Satisfactory details have been received in respect of the above records.

380(a) Pied Wagtail

M/S Inner London : a pair frequented the Victoria Tower Gardens and barges moored off the Lambeth side of the river during the nesting season, but no young were seen (RET, WGT).

There were no breeding records for the City bombed sites.

380(b) White Wagtail

E* King George V res., up to four from Apr. 21st to 29th (JLFP). Nazeing G.P., one on Apr. 28th (JLFP). Rainham Marsh, two Apr. 22nd, four on the 24th, 12 on the 28th and seven on the 29th (BPH, DF). Romford S.F., single birds on Apr. 21st, 22nd and 28th (RRS). Walthamstow Res., three on Apr. 15th (WCD).

H Hilfield Park Res., a male on Apr. 3rd (ABS). Old Parkbury, one on Apr. 22nd (EHW).

M Perry Oaks S.F., one on Mar. 24th (BWC). Staines area, present on many dates from Apr. 8th to 28th, maximum 10 on Apr. 15th (MJC, KDE, *et al.*) ; two on Sept. 16th (TE). Inner London : Kensington Gardens, one on Mar. 9th (CEL).

K Stone Marshes, a male on Apr. 29th (WIB).

S Barn Elms Res., up to four from Apr. 15th to 28th (seven observers) ; two on Sept. 22nd (TE). Beddington S.F., one Mar. 31st to Apr. 8th

and two Apr. 11th to 14th (seven observers). Epsom S.F., two Apr. 26th, one May 10th (BEC). Walton Res., one Apr. 21st, two Apr. 30th (GCG, DP).

381 Grey Wagtail

Breeding season records only are given.

- H East Barnet S.F., a pair in May (BSM). Hamper Mill, a pair nested (EHW). Hilfield Park Res., a pair in May (ABS).
- M Troy Mill G.P., near Denham, two pairs (IGJ). Harefield, bred at Bell Works (TLB, PRK, EHW). Hatch End, a pair in May (ABS).
- S Fetcham, a pair carrying food on June 25th (DAR). Leatherhead, one collecting food or nesting material on June 10th (GMC). Morden, two hens in May and June (RWW).

382(a) Yellow Wagtail

Only breeding localities not given in the *L.B.R.* for 1955 are given below.

- E West Thurrock Marsh, six pairs in breeding season (RH).
- H Croxley Moor, about three pairs attempted breeding, but were interrupted by grass fires (JDM). Hilfield Park Res., at least three pairs bred (GBDC). Maple Cross, almost certainly bred (DWB).
- M Mill Hill, one pair nested (EHW). Highgate Pond, a pair bred (GT).
- K Thames marshes, good numbers bred everywhere, especially Swanscombe (WIB).
- S A male remained at Beddington S.F. until the end of the year (five observers). A bird ringed at Beddington S.F. on July 8th was trapped in a roost estimated at 1,000 birds at Rainham marsh on Aug. 9th (DF, BPH).

As usual a number of birds resembling more or less closely the Blue-headed Wagtail (*flava*) were seen on passage, and on Sept. 8th at Beddington S.F., a bird closely resembling a typical cock grey-headed Wagtail (*thunbergi*) was seen at a range of a few yards (BSM).

383 Waxwing

- H Hadley Wood, one on Dec. 4th (GBDC).

384 Great Grey Shrike

- E* Hornchurch, one was trapped in the observer's garden on Jan. 8th (BPH).
- M Feltham G.P., one on Dec. 30th (PG, JMP). Harefield Moor, one on Feb. 28th (NHP). Perry Oaks S.F., one on Dec. 26th (JFWB).
- K Dartford Heath, one from Mar. 31st to mid-April (KHP, RJP).
- S Addington, single birds on Mar. 26th and 30th, Apr. 9th and Dec. 29th (ADB). Beddington S.F., and Mitcham Common, the bird present at the end of 1955 remained until May 2nd (BPA, WEB, BSM, RES). Kew Gardens, one on Dec. 15th (ACGW). Richmond Park,

one on Feb. 2nd, and Mar. 18th to 28th (PRC, SG, PJR). Wimbledon Common, one on Nov. 2nd (IRB).

385 Lesser Grey Shrike

S One at Banstead Downs on May 21st (WPI). Details will be published in *British Birds*. This is the first record for the London Area in the present century.

388 Red-backed Shrike

Breeding season records are given :

- E* Epping Forest, one pair at Fairmead (JF). Hainault Forest, a male on June 24th (FRT). Shenfield, three pairs (DF, BPH).
- H Barnet, three pairs (GBDC). Croxley Green, a hen on June 6th (JDM). Hadley Woods, one pair (GBDC). Moor Mill G.P., one pair (DJTH). Totteridge, one pair (GBDC).
- M North Finchley, one pair (GBDC), Ruislip, four pairs (TLB), Southgate, one pair (TRL), Winchmore Hill, two pairs (GBDC, TRL).
- S Banstead Downs, one pair (DAC) ; Coulsdon, a male on June 30th (GCG) ; Ham Common, one pair (FRM) ; Mitcham Common, three pairs (BPA) ; Wimbledon Common, two pairs (HPM).

389 Starling

There are a number of reports of movements, but as in the case of the Skylark, that of the 27th October was widespread, and details are given below.

- E* Harold Wood area, a big movement of flocks of up to 300 flying mainly N.N.W. or N.W. between 07.45 and 16.30 hrs. ; the movement continued on the 28th and on that day one colossal flock was estimated to be at least 400 yards in breadth (RBW). Sewardstone area, a heavy movement N.W. between 08.00 and 13.30 hrs., totalling 3000+ birds; the movement probably lasted well into the afternoon as a further 600 were noted flying W.N.W. at Fishers Green at 15.00 hrs. (JLFP).
- M Between 10.50 and 11.50 hrs. an almost constant succession of parties of up to 30 birds flying N.W. across Staines Res. ; later parties of up to 20 were crossing King George VI Res. in the same direction between 13.00 and 15.00 hrs. (CMV). Broomfield Park, four flocks of 150-200 birds flew N.W. during the morning (FJL).

391 Hawfinch

Breeding season records only are given.

- E* Epping Forest, two on May 6th (MAO).
- H Hadley Wood, an adult feeding young on July 4th (GBDC). Hatfield Park, a pair taking food to young in the nest on June 9th (AFM).
- M Hampstead Heath, at least one pair nested (GT). Ruislip, a pair in Mad Bess Wood on May 20th, and a single bird in Copse Wood on May 26th (BPP). Stanmore, one pair nested (EHW). Harrow Weald

Common, a nest found in May 23rd (ABS). North Harrow, three young reared from nest in a suburban garden (TLB). Inner London : Regent's Park, a pair seen feeding young on June 29th (EHW).

K Bean, one pair located (WIB).

S Kew, bred as usual (JWL). Old Coulsdon, four pairs in May (WEB). Richmond Park, one pair bred (EDB). Selsdon Wood one on June 27th (AJH). Wimbledon Common, four or five pairs nested (HPM).

393 Goldfinch

M Inner London : Regent's Park, at least one pair reared young (HCH, RET, WGT, EHW).

394 Siskin

More numerous than in recent winters. Only the larger parties are mentioned.

E* Weald Park, 30 on Apr. 7th (MSF).

H Cheshunt G.P., 50 in alders on Jan. 21st (RJL).

M Brent Park, up to 40 in February (GBDC, EHW). Denham Lock, 100+ on Feb. 12th (IGJ, BPP). Hampstead Heath, *c.* 40 on Nov. 29th (WSS). Southgate, *c.* 30 in Grovelands Park on Feb. 19th (ARM). Uxbridge, up to 40 in January (SK).

395 Linnet

M/S Inner London : the cold weather in February brought in large flocks ; Battersea Park, at least 82 on Feb. 19th ; Regent's Park, 40+ on Feb. 24th and 25th (JNAR, EHW).

396 Twite

S Epsom S.F., one on Mar. 10th and 11th (MJC). Satisfactory details have been received.

397 Redpoll

Breeding season records only are given.

E* Shenfield, frequently observed during the summer (DF).

M Hampstead, several young birds at the Heath Extension on July 3rd (EHW). Harrow Weald Common, a nest found on May 23rd (ABS). Stanmore Common, two pairs nested, one successfully (GBDC). Trent Park, several pairs present in the breeding season (TRL).

S Banstead Heath, one pair (HB). Cobham, one or two seen flying over in May and June (JCSF). Tadworth, one pair (HB).

404 Crossbill

E* Havering, a male and a female *c.* July 20th ; four flying E. calling on Sept. 16th (JEF). Havering Green, a female on Aug. 27th (JEF).

H Aldenham, a pair on Aug. 13th ; Elstree, a female and a young bird on Aug. 12th (EHW). Hadley Wood, seven on Feb. 12th and 23rd (GBDC), a female on Mar. 5th and a male on Apr. 6th (EHW).

- M Hampstead Garden Suburb, three on Aug. 6th (GOW). Perry Oaks S.F., four flying E. on Sept. 1st (JFWB). Stanmore, two on Dec. 21st (EHW).

407 Chaffinch

Details are given of a large movement to N.W. on Oct. 27th (*cf* Skylark and Starling) and a smaller return movement on Mar. 24th.

- E* Harold Wood area, a big movement to N.W. and N.N.W. between 08.25 and 15.15 hrs., Oct. 27th; flocks mainly *c.* 10 (RBW). Sewardstone area, an exceptionally heavy movement to N.W. and to a lesser extent to W.N.W. and N.N.W. between 07.30 and 13.30 hrs. on Oct. 27th; parties of from 10 to 200 birds passing over continuously at a height of 50 feet or less; the numbers taking part were estimated at 5000+ : a few birds were still moving at Fishers Green at 15.00 hrs. (JLFP).

- K Blackheath, *c.* 30 flying S.E. at 08.12 hrs. on Mar. 24th (RET, WGT).

- S Sutton, 49 flying S.E. and 12 E.S.E. on Mar. 24th (DAC). Wimbledon Common, between 08.30 and 10.30 hrs. many parties were observed, flying E. or S.E.; some were at least 50 strong; the wind was light S.E. (HPM). Dulwich, IRB noted movements of up to 200 birds every day from Oct. 14th to Nov. 7th with the exception of Oct. 27th, the date of the large movements noted in Essex.

Details are given below of four recoveries outside Great Britain of birds ringed in the London Area, and one recovery of a bird ringed abroad.

	<i>Ringed</i>		<i>Recovered</i>
17. 3.56	Romford	15. 5.56	Vassunda, Uppland, Sweden.
17. 3.56	Addington	14.11.56	Howth, Dublin.
10. 3.53	Upminster	27.10.56	St. Niklass, E. Flanders, Belgium.
12. 2.55	Brentwood	2. 4.56	Noord - Hinder lightship, N. Sea.
5.11.54	Loosduinen, The Hague, Holland	28.10.56	Romford, Essex.

- M Inner London : St. James's Park, one taking food from a man's hand on July 2nd (WGT).

408 Brambling

Many records up to April and from October onwards. Details are given of flocks of 100 or more, of birds migrating, and all records for Inner London.

- E* Sewardstone area, *c.* 50, identified by call, flying with migrant chaffinches on Oct. 27th (JLFP). West Thurrock Marsh, *c.* 100 from Mar. 10th to 24th (RH).

An adult female ringed at Romford, Essex, on 25th Feb., 1956, was recovered at Burgsteinfurt, Nordheim, Germany, on 26th March, 1956.

- M Perry Oaks S.F., 300+ in mid-March. Staines reservoirs, on Oct. 21st between 09.30 and 11.30 hrs. calls of Bramblings were frequently heard with Chaffinches during a small movement W.S.W. (HPM).
- K Dartford Marshes, a vast flock of at least 1,000 all of which appeared to be Bramblings on Mar. 18th (RET, WGT).
- S Hersham S.F., *c.* 150 on Feb. 21st and 24th (CMP). Wimbledon Common, between 08.30 and 10.30 hrs. on Mar. 24th Bramblings were frequently identified flying S.E. with parties of Chaffinches (HPM).
- M/S Inner London : birds were seen mainly during the cold spell in February with other hard weather visitors ; Battersea Park, a maximum of nine with Linnets on Feb. 11th ; Holland Park, a flock of *c.* 20 in mid-February ; Regent's Park, a male with Linnets and Skylarks on Feb. 24th and 25th ; a female on Nov. 19th (HCH, H, JNAR, EHW). Kensington Gardens, a female on Mar. 28th (CHH, CHFP).

409 Yellowhammer

- M Inner London : Regent's Park, a female on Feb. 1st (EHW).

410 Corn Bunting

Only localities in which present in the breeding season, and which were not included in the *L.B.R.* for 1955 are mentioned below.

- E *Fishers Green G.P., a single male ; *Sewardstone, two pairs and a third male (JLFP). *Nazeing G.P., one singing male ; *Waltham Abbey, two singing males (DAH). West Thurrock Marshes, three pairs (RH).
- H Maple Cross, two singing males (DWB, BPP). Ridge Hill, one singing on July 12th (EHW).
- K Crayford Creek, Dartford Marshes, Stone and Swanscombe, present in the breeding season (WIB). Longfield, two singing males ; Bean, one singing male (WIB).
- S Beddington S.F., one singing on many dates in May but no evidence of breeding (BPA, BSM). Richmond Park, one on May 13th (BEC).

415 Cirl Bunting

- H London Colney, one singing in an elm on Aug. 17th (EHW).
- S Cobham, one singing in Reed's School grounds on many dates from May 17th to June 5th (JCSF).

420 Little Bunting

- M Staines Res., two on the causeway on Apr. 7th (DIMW) ; see *B.B. L.*, p. 208.

S Beddington S.F., two were first seen on Mar. 31st by GJH, and the presence of a third, which had been suspected, was confirmed on Apr. 3rd. One was last seen on Apr. 14th, another on the 18th, and the last on the 21st (GJH, BPA, BSM, CMP, RES) ; see *B.B. L.*, p. 208. These are the first records for the London Area in the present century.

416 Ortolan Bunting

M Brent Res., a female on Sept. 2nd (ES) ; see *B.B. L.*, p. 118.

423 Snow Bunting

M Brent Res., one on Oct. 18th, Nov. 4th and 28th (DWT, EHW). Perry Oaks S.F., a male on Nov. 4th (REE, HPM). Staines reservoirs, the bird present at the end of 1955 (see *L.B.R.* 20, p. 37) remained until Feb. 26th (many observers) ; one on Nov. 2nd (PJR).

S Barn Elms Res., a female on Nov. 25th (DWT). Beddington S.F., two on Nov. 11th (GJH, BSM). Kingswood, five flying over on Jan. 16th ; an immature male in a field on Jan. 17th and 19th (KDE). Walton Res., one on Nov. 24th and 25th (BEC, GCG).

425 Tree Sparrow

Only breeding season records for localities not mentioned in the *L.B.R.* for 1955, and a record for Inner London, are given.

E *Dagenham G.P., a few nests were in Sand Martins' holes (BPH). Bred at Chingford (JLFP). Pairs recorded in breeding season at Brentwood S.F., Upminster Common, and Warley (RBW). Walthamstow Res., four pairs feeding young in July (JF).

H Hamper Mill, three on May 19th (PRK). Hilfield Park Res., colony of ten pairs (ABS).

M Inner London : Regent's Park, one on Mar. 12th (EHW).

S Morden, four pairs nested (RWW). Richmond Park, two pairs bred (EDB).

Additions and Corrections to London Bird Report number 20 for 1955

73 Shelduck

The entry for Sewardstone G.P. under Herts should be under Essex.

91 Buzzard

M Hampstead Heath, single birds on June 20th and Aug. 28th (MB, GT).

249 Short-eared Owl

M Hampstead Heath, one on Apr. 3rd (MF).

311 Wheatear

S Richmond Park, a pair present near Bog Lodge in mid-April ; on May 20th, two young which could just about fly were seen, and at the end of May, adults with four young were seen perched on a fence (AFK).

Wildfowl and Wader Movements in the London Area in the severe weather of February, 1956

BY R. C. HOMES

Summary

1. Details are given of the exceptionally severe weather in early 1956 and of the wildfowl and wader movements in the London Area.
2. The variety of waders in winter was unprecedented, and there are no previous records of higher numbers of knot, jack snipe and bar-tailed godwits. A purple sandpiper was only the fourth since 1900.
3. There was a great influx of diving ducks, and record numbers of tufted ducks, red-breasted mergansers and smew were noted. Goosander and pochard were more numerous than usual. The numbers of surface-feeding ducks were not much affected.
4. More whooper and Bewick's swans were seen than ever before. Many records of both compare with only two previous ones of whoopers and about fifteen of Bewick's swans since 1900.
5. Some evidence is given that the ducks came in direct from the Netherlands and adjoining countries rather than northern Britain.

January was a month of varied weather, and at one period in Scotland and north-east England frost all day alternated with day temperatures of 50 degrees or more. In the south it was fairly consistently mild, and at Kew air temperatures never fell below 29 degrees at night. Early on the 29th, however, an anticyclone which had formed the previous day over the north of Russia spread over Scandinavia and Germany. In Finland a cold airstream from the north-east brought the temperature down from a minimum of 9°F on the 28th to - 11°F in the early morning of the 29th. The cold current reached the north of Germany on the 30th and the temperature in Warsaw was 3°F compared with 21°F the previous day. By the 31st the temperature was falling right across the Continent, ranging from -16°F in Warsaw to 25°F in Brussels. In England heavy falls of snow in the Midlands and Thanet were followed by a 20 degree drop in temperature ; even in London it was down to 23 at midnight and the maximum temperature at Kew on February 1st was 24 degrees. By this time central Europe was colder than at any time since 1917, with 81 degrees of frost in Moscow. In western Germany there were 36 degrees of frost and the Elbe estuary was frozen for the first time that winter. At mid-day on the 2nd the temperature in Paris was 12°F, Brussels 14° and Berlin and Amsterdam 19°. The River Main was frozen throughout its length and snow extended to the south of France and practically the whole of Italy. In Oslo and Stockholm, on the other hand, it was about ten degrees higher, and at Stornoway and in Spitzbergen it was 34°F. Whereas on the Atlantic coast of France it was still above freezing point on the morning of the 1st, by the 2nd there were up to 20 degrees of frost throughout France and as much as 40 degrees in the north-east. Similar conditions persisted until the 4th February.

On January 29th small flocks of lapwings (*Vanellus vanellus*) were flying W. and N.W. at Barn Elms, but the first large-scale movements were observed on the 31st in France (Roux) and in our own Area 54 curlew (*Numenius arquata*) were seen at Beddington. That night there was a widespread emigration from the north-east of France. Although this was in the middle of the week, when bird-watching in winter is at a low level, the course of events was closely followed at Beddington and Epsom sewage farms and at the mouth of the River Darent. On February 1st dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) at Aldenham and the two sewage farms mentioned totalled 23 and there were 18 at the mouth of the Darent, where there were also 16 sanderling (*Crocethia alba*)—the largest flock recorded in the Area this century was of 17. Other waders included two ruffs (*Philomachus pugnax*) at Beddington, 16 golden plover (*Charadrius apricarius*) at the same place and a few at Epsom, and 5 redshanks (*Tringa totanus*), which are very unusual inland at this season. Lapwings at Beddington had increased from *c.* 1,200 the previous day to *c.* 2,000, and at Epsom there were *c.* 1,200 in the morning but only *c.* 200 by the evening. The curlew which were still at Beddington were down to 12 on the next day.

On February 2nd there were about 170 shore waders at Beddington, including 82 dunlin, 23 knot (*Calidris canutus*), 5 sanderling, 57 ringed plovers (*Charadrius hiaticula*) 2 turnstones (*Arenaria interpres*), a purple sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*) and a bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*); there were also 17 ruffs, a remarkable assembly inland in winter. On the 4th four sanderlings remained at Beddington and there was one at Littleton. The following day two were seen at the Girling and one at King George V reservoir. There were over 40 dunlin on the 4th at Beddington and Epsom sewage farms, Staines, King George VI and Queen Mary reservoirs, the Thames at Hammersmith and at Ruxley gravel pit. On the Stone marshes there were about 20 knot. Lapwing numbers were well down, and the numbers of jack snipe (*Lymnocryptes minimus*) had increased a little at Beddington but were still quite normal at Epsom. An oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) appeared at Brent reservoir on the 8th.

In view of the abnormal conditions a special duck count was made at the principal waters in the Area on the week-end of February 4th/5th. Compared with January 15th there was no appreciable change in the numbers of mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and teal (*Anas crecca*), but there were nearly twice as many wigeon (*Anas penelope*) and shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*). The numbers involved, however, were not exceptional, and it was the diving ducks which were the most affected. At the Lea valley reservoirs, Brent, Barn Elms, Molesey, Island Barn, Queen Mary and Staines, there were on February 5th just over 5,000 tufted ducks (*Aythya fuligula*) and nearly 2,500 pochard (*Aythya ferina*), more than double the usual numbers for the time of year. There is no previous record of as many tufted duck and the only previous higher count of pochard was for the whole Area and included about 500 on waters not included in the present check. At Barn Elms alone there were 4,000 diving ducks.

Goldeneye were in little higher numbers than usual, but a flock of 24 red-breasted mergansers (*Mergus serrator*) was reported at Molesey and a total of some 200 smew (*Mergus albellus*) was about equal to the previous record. At Staines there was a party of 19 common scoters (*Melanitta nigra*). Goosanders (*Mergus merganser*) were in normal numbers and there were as yet no additional scaup (*Aythya marila*). A single shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) was in the Lea Valley on the 5th and four on the 7th, while there were up to three at Hilfield Park from the 3rd to the 6th.

Five wild swans, believed to be whoopers (*Cygnus cygnus*) flew N.E. over Coulsdon at 9 a.m. At 11.05 three definite whoopers left Barn Elms and flew over King George VI reservoir at 11.20, while two whoopers flew over Island Barn reservoir at 11.15. They were presumably the same birds as the ones seen at Coulsdon. No grey geese appeared at this time, although 75-80 pink-footed geese (*Anser arvensis brachyrhynchus*) had flown south over Hainault Forest on January 28th, and three white-fronted geese (*Anser albifrons*) were seen in the Lea valley on the same date. It must be borne in mind, however, that between January 28th, a Sunday, and February 4th, the next Saturday, much may have gone unrecorded, although it is known that the biggest increase in diving ducks was between February 4th and 5th.

The severe conditions changed suddenly on Saturday the 4th, and a front of warm air moving in from the Atlantic caused a rapid thaw in most parts of England. During the night of February 9th/10th the cold returned and freezing N.E. winds were directed mainly towards eastern and southern England. Many villages in east Kent were isolated by snow drifts, and the sea froze along parts of the south coast.

Most of the shore waders left after the previous week-end, but at Epsom there was a large increase of jack snipe during the day on the 11th, rising to 73 by the evening compared with 15 a week before. The numbers of tufted duck remained high, about 4,500 as against 5,000 on the same waters on the 5th, but there were only half as many pochard. Goosanders had increased from 120 to 230 at Molesey, and there were at least 338 on the main waters. There was little change, however, in the numbers of surface-feeding ducks. Six Bewick's (*Cygnus bewickii*) and three whooper swans were seen in the Lea valley and 13 Bewick's at Stoke Newington. Nine Bewick's, which had been at Hilfield Park reservoir since the 9th, were last seen on the 11th. There was one whooper on Staines Moor. On the 7th, 14 swans, of one of these two species, had flown over King George V reservoir.

A very temporary thaw started in parts of England on the 12th, but Arctic weather persisted over parts of the Continent, and a cold airstream from Scandinavia was again blowing across Britain on the 13th. The following day it reached the west coast and Ireland. On the 15th and 16th warmer air from the Atlantic raised temperatures a little, but on the 17th frost prevailed almost everywhere from Kent to Yorkshire and there was no break for another week. The Thames was frozen over for a quarter of a mile near Windsor, yet in N.W. Scotland an afternoon temperature of 41 degrees was recorded on the 22nd. The cold airstream was now coming from southern Russia rather than Siberia.

For the week-end of the 18th/19th less information is available. With the freezing-up of almost the whole of Barn Elms the duck had started moving, apparently to Molesey as in 1947, and there tufted duck which had been down to 700 increased again to about 1,500. On the 19th there were 900 at Island Barn where they are usually a rarity. The first scaup were two at Stone on the 13th, and although up to six were seen later at two places there were never many more than a dozen in all. In the Lea valley there were over 50 red-breasted mergansers, over 100 smew and a herd of 49 Bewick's swans.

On the 24th Iceland was enjoying spring-like weather, but on the Scheldt estuary ice-breakers were in use and the Iberian peninsula was still having heavy snow. It was not until the 25th that the temperature in London rose above freezing point for the first time in 163 hours. On the 26th it was slightly warmer over most of Europe and during the next few days there was a gradual thaw.

A further pronounced influx of ducks accompanied the second severe spell. At Barn Elms, Molesey and the Lea valley reservoirs, where there were 574 mallard on the 12th, there were 975 on the 25th, and the number at Barn Elms was up again on the 26th, but these are among the sheltered reservoirs, and we do not know if there was a corresponding decrease at the larger, more exposed waters. Seven pintails appeared at Molesey on the 27th, one at Staines on the 26th and one at Hilfield Park on March 4th. As in early February it was the diving ducks that were most affected, and on the week-end of the 25th/26th the number of tufted ducks on the waters counted on the 5th was probably little short of 6,000 and pochard also seemed to be slightly more numerous. The two species were distributed as follows :—

<i>Feb. 25/26</i>	<i>Tufted duck</i>	<i>Pochard</i>	
Lea valley ...	850-1,250	253	
Barn Elms ...	<i>c.</i> 100	22	
Molesey group	2,000-2,500	2,000-2,250	
Island Barn ...	1,500-1,800	<i>c.</i> 200	
Queen Mary...	<i>c.</i> 200	very few	
Brent ...	50-100	?	
Staines ...	say 450-500	say 250-350	No count made here, but there were 475 tufted and 353 pochard on Feb. 12th and 485 tufted and 250 pochard on Mar. 11th.
Total ...	<u>5,150-6,450</u>	<u>2,725-3,075</u>	

Several ducks of the rarer species had arrived about the week-end of 18th/19th. A ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*) appeared at Barn Elms on the 19th, and there were single velvet scoters (*Melanitta fusca*) at the Girling and Brent reservoirs on the 18th. At Molesey there was one on the 23rd and four from the 26th onwards. Up to three common scoters were seen at several localities between the 19th and the 26th. There was little further increase in goldeneyes (*Bucephala clangula*), about 60 on the 5th comparing with 74 on the 25th.

The sawbills habitually move frequently from one water to another with the result that it is extremely difficult to be sure of the total numbers involved. The most unusual feature in the number of the three species concerned was the flocks of red-breasted mergansers that appeared in the Lea and Thames valleys. Apart from a flock at Molesey on February 5th, the first large numbers were seen on the 18th, when there were about 50 in the Lea valley and seven at Barn Elms. A week later there were 60-70, and possibly even more in the first area, nine at Barn Elms and up to 15 at Molesey, with a few at the Brent reservoir, Queen Mary, Staines, Island Barn and at least two gravel pits. While some of the counts were on the 25th and others on the 26th, and there may have been some duplication, it is equally possible that other birds were missed, and there were evidently about a hundred in all in the Area—previously there had never been more than five recorded at a time !

In comparison, the numbers of goosander and smew were not so remarkable, although both were undoubtedly more numerous than usual. The largest flocks at different waters were not all on the same date, and in a confused situation the largest aggregate of goosanders seems to have been on the 12th when in the whole Area 363 were counted, over half as many again as the maximum in most winters. There were probably about the same number a fortnight later, and there does not seem to have been any increase until the first week of March when a return passage is often evident and there may have been slightly more on this occasion.

The difficulty of assessing the total numbers of smew is well illustrated by counts of 29 and 60 on one water on the same day and of 72 and over 100 on another. However, on February 5th there were not less than 225 and on the week-end of the 25th/26th there may have been 250-300—on the 28th there were 104 at the Brent reservoir alone. While larger individual flocks have very occasionally been recorded, it is doubtful if the total numbers have ever much exceeded 200 before. From an examination of the sizes of the flocks at different localities during February, 1956, it is quite possible that the estimated totals may be appreciably below the real figure.

The movements of geese in winter are often in surprising directions and difficult to interpret. A party of 75-80 pinkfeet flew *north* over Coulsdon on the 26th, while four whitefronts flew *east* over Molesey reservoirs on the same day. Other records of "grey geese" were of 40 flying N.W. over Stoneleigh on the 24th and up to 22 at King George VI reservoir on the 26th, including one definite whitefront.

Details of the swans seen during the first influx of wildfowl have already been given. In the second major influx, 25 Bewick's were seen at Cheshunt gravel pit and single birds at Hilfield Park and the Brent reservoirs. Several parties of whoopers appeared at the same time : in the Lea valley, 25 at Fisher's Green and 11 at Cheshunt gravel pits and seven at Hoddesdon sewage farm ; at the Brent there were two, while south of the Thames five were seen at Ruxley gravel pit and eight in Gatton Park. It is not possible to say how many of these were different birds, but in view of the widespread movements taking place several different parties may have been involved.

The unusual nature of these events in the London Area is amply illustrated by the number of previous definite records of the two species since 1900, namely two of the whooper swan and about fifteen of the Bewick's swan, of which only two were before 1944. The development of a substantial wintering population of the latter species in the Fenland (cf. *B.B.*, 48 : 533-7) may well have some bearing on its more frequent occurrence in our Area in this and previous winters.

After the week-end few swans seem to have remained, but there was a return passage on April 1st, when 19 whoopers were seen in the Lea valley flying south and two hours later 29 flying N.E. ; on the same day there were 22 Bewick's swans in the Lea valley and 33 at Hilfield Park.

In the second half of the month there was a further movement of waders. One or two grey plovers (*Charadrius hiaticula*) were at Beddington between the 22nd and 26th, and during the week-end of the 25th/26th there were five sanderling and 81 dunlin at West Thurrock marshes, 15-20 bar-tailed godwits at Littleton and an increase of jack snipe at Beddington, the number of godwits being easily the highest for the Area this century. Ruffs were seen in several places but the presence of a wintering flock at Perry Oaks makes it uncertain whether their appearance in other localities had the same origin as the movements of other unusual waders inland at this season.

Several of the rarer grebes and divers were observed during the hard weather, but their numbers were not so exceptional as those of some of the waders and wildfowl, and full details will be found in the specific notes elsewhere in this *Report*.

Origin of the Movement

Unfortunately duck are ringed at so few places and in such relatively small numbers that direct evidence of the course of a movement of this nature is inevitably small. A tufted duck which had been ringed near Rotterdam in December, 1954, was recovered at King George V reservoir in February, 1956, but this of course is inconclusive as a year had intervened.

The huge influx of diving ducks was also noted in north Kent where large numbers congregated in February on flooded clay pits near Cliffe, suggesting a movement from east to west up the Thames estuary as would be expected from a study of the prevailing weather conditions. It is significant, therefore, that a pochard ringed near Rotterdam on January 6th was caught near Tilbury on February 27th ; that a teal ringed near Amsterdam on January 23rd was shot only six days later at Rochford (Essex), and that a wigeon ringed at Texel on December 6th, 1955, was shot in the Medway estuary on February 19th. During February the total number of duck in the Netherlands was reported to be distinctly lower than in normal winters.

A comparison with the hard weather in about the same period of 1954 is of interest in this connection. In that year the frost here was more severe than in 1956, and in France birds ringed in Great Britain constituted more

than two-thirds of the recoveries of foreign-ringed birds between January 24th and February 28th, whereas in 1956 for the month of February they were less than a half. The proportion of British-ringed birds in the first week of February was much greater than in the second week (Roux). It was after the initial wave of the first week of February that the direction of the cold front became easterly rather than south-east, and the evidence from ringing recoveries, the events in the Thames estuary and the known movement of the cold front suggest strongly that the flow of birds into this country in the second half of February was direct from the Netherlands and adjoining countries rather than from more northerly parts of Britain.

The unprecedented appearance of mergansers in such large numbers inland was also noticed in Belgium, where there were 30 on February 20th and 38 on the 25th on a canal in Brussels bordered almost entirely by houses and factories. At the same time there were up to 30 smew. The greater severity of conditions on the Continent is borne out by the obvious exhaustion and extreme approachability of many usually wary species; bean geese (*Anser fabalis*), for example, only flew at a range of 20 metres, and coot and wigeon attempted to feed on green vegetables (Verschuren).

The relatively sheltered nature of the London waters is also illustrated by the lack of any very marked fall in the numbers of surface-feeding ducks at a time when there was a very pronounced drop in numbers at the Abberton and Hanningfield reservoirs nearer the coast. Taking the numbers of teal as an example, there were 2,147 at Abberton and Hanningfield in the middle of January but only 120 on February 12th, whereas on the principal London waters on the same dates there were 1,174 and 868. For mallard the comparison was even more marked, and a substantial increase of pochard and tufted duck in London compared with a decrease at Abberton and Hanningfield (cf. *Essex Bird Report* for 1956).

Acknowledgment

The completion of this paper has only been possible as a result of the special efforts made by members of the L.N.H.S. to record the results of the cold spell. Thanks are specially due to those members who agreed at very short notice to make a simultaneous census on the principal waters on the week-end of February 4th/5th.

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The Census of Great Crested Grebes 1946 to 1955

Final Report and Summary of Results

BY W. D. MELLUISH

The ten year census of Great Crested Grebes (*Podiceps cristatus*) in the breeding season, instituted by The British Trust for Ornithology in 1946, was the second attempt to measure accurately the changes occurring in a bird population over a number of years, and was planned to provide comparison with the results of the annual Heronry Census. This had provided valuable clues on such subjects, among others, as the effect of severe weather, speed of recovery and the apparent difficulty of building up the population beyond a certain figure.

It was decided that the ground to be surveyed should consist of adjacent counties disposed over as great an extent of England as seemed likely to be covered annually, and twenty-one were selected, stretching from Lancashire and Yorkshire to Berkshire and Surrey. The Ornithological Section of the London Natural History Society undertook the responsibility of finding each summer from 1946 to 1955 a team of observers to cover all suitable waters within twenty miles of St. Paul's Cathedral. Kent was not among the counties chosen for the national sample census, but as a small part of this county lies within the Society's boundaries it is included in our survey.

This paper is based on the annual reports which have appeared in the *L.B.R.* since 1946, the interim report written at the half-way stage by P. A. D. Hollom (*B.B. No. 11, Vol. XLIV*, pp. 361-369) and the results from the field work done in the final summer (1955).

The first annual report for the Ornithological Section was also written by P. A. D. Hollom, the national organizer of the census (*L.B.R. No. 11*, pp. 32-35) and the inquiry was originally planned within our Area by C. B. Ashby, E. O. Hohn and E. R. Parrinder, the last named continuing to administer the census until 1950, when the present writer took over. Thanks are due, and are warmly accorded, to those members mentioned above and also to the 102 observers, listed at the end of this report, who assisted in carrying out the field work, and without whose valuable co-operation no success for the survey could have been achieved. One would particularly like to thank those who sent in record cards each summer unfailingly throughout the entire series of counts.

For the purpose of the census the breeding season was taken to be May and June, and observers were asked to count the number of adult great crested grebes present on June 7th of each summer, as a target date. It has been found that numbers fluctuate somewhat, even at the height of

the breeding season, and where records were sent in for varying dates the count nearest to June 7th was invariably accepted.

The object of the survey was to ascertain, as accurately as possible, the correct total of adult grebes and so where there were reasons for supposing that a single bird might have a mate incubating out of sight in cover it was recorded as one of a pair and counted as two.

The printed census cards issued by the B.T.O. asked observers to distinguish between breeding and non-breeding birds, entering this detail in the "Remarks" column. But as many of the nesting sites were on islands difficult, or impossible, of access and since an accurate assessment of breeding numbers often required more visits than observers were able to make, it was felt that counts of nesting pairs were unlikely to be much more than approximations, useful to indicate trends, but probably too low and differing by an appreciable amount from the true figures. Any subsequent reference to the number of breeding pairs must, therefore, be understood to bear this qualification.

The original air and ground surveys, undertaken as a preliminary to the first series of counts, disclosed a number of unmapped gravel pits and the full list of likely waters totalled 190. They can conveniently be classified as follows :—

	<i>Bucks</i>	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Herts</i>	<i>Kent</i>	<i>Middlesex</i>	<i>Surrey</i>	<i>Total</i>
Flooded Gravel Pits	5	18	28	8	53	17	129
Lakes and Ponds	2	7	3	1	3	11	27
Reservoirs ...	—	14	1	—	14	5	34
					GRAND TOTAL		<u>190</u>

The separation of the waters under county headings is merely an arbitrary division, made for convenience and to help in presenting to the mind a picture of the survey area, and here it should be recalled that of the six counties only Middlesex is entirely contained within its boundaries.

In that county are to be found nearly half of the gravel pits. These varied in character between the newly dug and recently flooded pit—in its original state entirely devoid of cover—and the disused type, excavated fifteen to twenty years ago perhaps and bearing the semblance of a natural lake, with reeds, willows and other vegetation, where islands often formed convenient nesting sites. New pits were constantly being opened up and worked-out ones filled in, so that there was a continual though small variation in the number and distribution of the pits from year to year.

Lakes and ponds were mostly of the semi-natural kind, with some of the banks partly artificial, often tree-lined and providing a certain amount of cover. A few of the reservoirs were of a similar description, where only one of four sides has a sheer concrete margin, the others being gently shelving and wooded, as at Aldenham. In contrast are the large, entirely artificially constructed reservoirs of the Metropolitan Water Board, usually of considerable depth and having bare concrete banks, which provide no breeding sites, being without cover of any kind.

With so large an area to be surveyed each summer it was inevitable that in some years a few waters could not be visited for one reason or another, and in considering the results and comparing one year with the next estimates have been made to fill in these gaps. Such additions have been calculated by reference to the annual rise or fall shown by the strictly comparable totals, in which any waters not visited in both the years under consideration are excluded. In the report for 1950, at the half-way stage (*L.B.R. No. 15*, pp. 46-48), figures were given showing that the strictly comparable and estimated totals varied year by year to very much the same extent and the latter are therefore used in the following table of results (Table I), since the true number of grebes is probably more rather than less than that recorded at any time and strictly comparable figures would, in some cases, be below those of the complete counts.

TABLE I
ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF ADULT GREAT CRESTED
GREBES IN THE BREEDING SEASON

	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
BUCKS										
Gravel Pits ...	27	27	41	30	51	49	28	55	40	29
Other Waters...	—	—	—	—	9	4	2	14	12	—
ESSEX										
Gravel Pits ...	19	12	11	11	11	11	18	26	26	28
Other Waters...	47	40	62	72	90	64	79	113	85	46
HERTS										
Gravel Pits ...	39	34	53	50	51	64	54	66	85	51
Other Waters...	29	14	24	32	24	32	24	46	62	46
KENT										
Gravel Pits ...	5	2	3	2	2	6	12	13	7	4
Other Waters...	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
MIDDLESEX										
Gravel Pits ...	91	81	103	90	100	133	90	116	121	116
Other Waters...	37	34	45	47	62	72	50	87	64	52
SURREY										
Gravel Pits ...	15	10	6	26	27	29	43	26	12	12
Other Waters...	44	38	46	60	130	78	82	73	76	61
TOTALS										
Gravel Pits ...	196	166	217	209	242	292	245	302	291	240
Other Waters...	159	126	177	211	315	250	237	333	299	205
GRAND TOTALS										
(Estimated) ...	355	292	394	420	557	542	482	635	590	445
Actual number counted ...										
Proportion of total represented by estimate ...	2.5%	16.8%	3.3%	6.4%	.5%	1.8%	nil	1.27%	nil	3.0%
INDEX of Estd. Totals expressed as percentages of 1946 (= 100) ...										
	100	82	111	118	157	153	136	178	166	125

There are two previous censuses of great crested grebes with which the figures obtained from the 1946-55 counts may be compared. These were made in 1931 and 1935, when there were 225 and 202 birds. If our index is based on 1946 = 100, the comparable values for these two earlier censuses become 63 and 57, respectively. Thus the present series of counts commenced with a great increase in the summer population of grebes throughout the London Area, amounting to a rise of 75% over the immediately preceding count. As it is now generally accepted that freshly filled waters have a particular attraction for breeding grebes, it is reasonable to suppose that the digging of so many gravel pits during the last twenty-five years has been a major cause of this increase. But in the second year of the series, 1947, the weather proved to be the dominant factor and numbers fell by 17.7% owing to the prolonged cold spell, in which many waters remained frozen over until the middle of March.

In the following year there was a remarkable recovery, the 1946 numbers being more than made good by a margin of 11%, with a count of 394. There was a smaller increase in 1949 to 420 birds (index = 118) and then followed a sudden jump by 32.6% for the year to a total of 557 (554 actually counted) in 1950. For the first time numbers on reservoirs and lakes exceeded 300 and the grand total more than doubled the 1931 figure. The increase on these waters was much greater than on gravel pits, the two types of habitat showing rises of 49.3% and 15.8% respectively.

In 1951 and 1952 there were recessions by 2.5% and then 9.4% in the total counts although during the same period there was no effective falling off in numbers on gravel pits, where counts of 292 and 245 were made, compared with 242 in 1950.

After these two years of decline in total strength, the falling trend was reversed by a steep rise of similar proportion to that which occurred between 1949 and 1950, the figures for comparison being :—

Percentage increase in total population, 1950 over						
1949	...	...	...	...	...	32.6%
Percentage increase in total population, 1953 over						
1952	...	...	...	...	...	31.8%

The 1953 total of birds (627 actually counted) was the highest of the series and in the 22 years that had elapsed since the original census was taken in 1931 London's great crested grebe population had increased by 182%.

There were 302 birds on gravel pits and 333 on reservoirs and lakes—maximum numbers for both types of waters. But after this peak there was a drop of 7.1% in the following year and in 1955 the final counts showed a more considerable falling off, numbers being reduced by 17.5% on gravel pits and 31.4% on other waters, a decline of 24.6% in total. Thus, at the end of this survey of summer populations there remained in the Society's Area 445 adult grebes, the average figures for the ten years being :—

				<i>Average number of birds</i>
On gravel pits	...	...	...	239
On other waters	...	...	...	231
				<hr/>
Total on all waters	...	...	...	470
				<hr/> <hr/>

Throughout the period of survey it was noticeable that the grebe population was more variable on "other waters" than on gravel pits, building up to a greater extent, largely with non-breeding birds on the reservoirs, when total numbers were high and falling to a greater degree than in the more confined habitats provided by the pits, when they were low. An example of this wide variation in numbers on reservoirs is given by the Surrey records which show that only 24 birds were counted in 1946 on the same five waters that were to harbour 91 in 1950.

All the waters studied except Dagenham Breach and the Grand Junction Reservoir were occupied at some time during the survey and can thus be regarded as being suitable for the species: this description ignores such factors as food, vegetation and change of usage, which may have been critical but concerning which insufficient data were obtained. The records show that in every breeding season many more such apparently suitable waters were available than grebes occupied. Thus any decline in numbers following a peak year could hardly be due directly to competition for water space but could be due to change in suitability of the waters. The number of waters occupied by grebes each season were as follows:—

	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
Gravel Pits	49	49	44	35	46	57	51	52	49	48
Other Waters	38	21	34	34	37	38	37	43	45	35
<hr/>										
Total Waters Occupied	87	70	78	69	83	95	88	95	94	83
<hr/> <hr/>										

The figures given refer to waters actually visited by observers and if those for 1947 and 1949—when an appreciable number could not be covered—are ignored, it will be seen that the lowest number occupied was 78, in 1948 when the index of population was 111, and the highest 95 in 1951 and 1953, when indexes were 153 and 178. The average proportion of apparently suitable waters in use by grebes in the breeding season was therefore less than half, the figures of occupation being:—

	<i>Total number of suitable waters available</i>	<i>Average number occupied</i>	<i>Percentage of total occupied</i>
Gravel Pits	129	48	37%
Other waters	59	36	61%
Total	188	84	45%
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The number of breeding pairs counted by observers and quoted in the individual annual reports varied from a minimum of 57 in 1948, following

the cold spring of the previous year and when the total count was 394, to a peak of 149 pairs in 1950, when there were 557 birds. Since the main object of the survey was to discover as nearly as possible the exact strength of the adult population, the study of breeding was a secondary consideration and with this factor in mind, together with that of the difficulty of observation mentioned above, these figures can only be regarded with reserve. Average figures for the series give 40% breeders and 60% non-breeders and it is perhaps surprising that only in the summer of 1950, when the greatest number of nesting pairs was recorded were there more breeders than non-breeders on the waters of our area.

Gravel pits formed the most favoured habitat for nesting and the results for two summers may be quoted as typical : in 1950 there were 89 pairs on gravel pits, representing 59% out of the total of 149 pairs and in 1954 comparable figures were 65, or 60% of 114 pairs.

A word may be added concerning the area of water available to grebes. Observers were asked in 1954 to record the approximate acreage of the waters on which they found birds, where such measurement was practicable, and figures were sent in for 51 out of the 94 occupied waters. These showed that some 3,409 acres of water accommodated 280 grebes, with a density of .82 birds per 10 acres. Thus, on average, there were over 12 acres of water available to each adult grebe, but as would be expected the density varied greatly according to the character of the habitat. It may be of interest in this connection to place on record that in two cases a nesting pair was found on flooded gravel pits that were only four acres in extent.

Table II shows the distribution of great crested grebes and the actual numbers counted during the breeding season in the London Area, from 1946 to 1955. For convenience of space groups of waters have been added together ; for example the Walthamstow Reservoirs and the Poyle series of gravel pits have each been shown under one heading. Groupings of this kind are indicated by the letter (G) after the place name. Some waters were not included on the original list but brought in after reports of occupation had been received. The years prior to inclusion appear as blank spaces in such cases. A dash indicates *no grebes* and N/V = *not visited*.

TABLE II

ADULT GREAT CRESTED GREBES IN THE BREEDING SEASON

Actual numbers counted

BUCKS	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
<i>Gravel Pits</i>										
Iver (G) ...	7	2	13	4	4	6	6	6	6	4
Wraysbury ...	16	23	19	20	49	33	8	43	30	17
Colnbrook ...	4	2	9	6	7	8	12	—	—	6
Savehay Farm ...						2	2	6	4	2
	27	27	41	30	60	49	28	55	40	29
<i>Other Waters</i>										
Colnbrook By-pass	—	—	—	—	—	4	2	14	12	—
BUCKS TOTALS ...	27	27	41	30	60	53	30	69	52	29

LONDON BIRD REPORT

ESSEX	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
<i>Gravel Pits</i>										
Mayesbrook Park	2	2	2	2	—	—	—	—	N/V	N/V
Goodmayes ...	N/V	3	2	—	3	—	2	4	2	—
Dagenham (G) ...	2	3	—	2	4	4	8	10	6	6
Sewardstone ...	7	2	3	2	2	2	filled	—	—	—
Fisher's Green ...	5	2	4	5	2	5	8	12	18	22
	16	12	11	11	11	11	18	26	26	28
<i>Other Waters</i>										
Eagle Pond, Snaresbrook ...	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	—	1	—
Wanstead Park ...	—	N/V	N/V	N/V	—	2	—	—	—	—
Parsloes Park ...	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	N/V
Dagenham Breach	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Navestock Park ...	—	1	N/V	N/V	—	N/V	N/V	N/V	N/V	N/V
King George V Res. ...	9	N/V	N/V	N/V	7	—	2	27	8	N/V
Walthamstow Reservoirs (G)	34	N/V	49	58	77	55	71	73	60	35
Hornchurch Chase					2	3	2	2	3	—
William Girling Res. ...								9	12	N/V
	47	5	53	62	90	64	79	113	85	35
ESSEX TOTALS ...	63	17	64	73	101	75	97	139	111	63
HERTS.										
<i>Gravel Pits</i>										
West Hyde ...	6	N/V	6	8	13	8	3	—	4	—
West Hyde South						2	2	—	—	—
Maple Cross ...	N/V	N/V	2	2	2	—	4	4	2	6
Maple Cross South						2	—	8	2	3
Aquadrome										
Rickmansworth	1	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	1	1
Stocker's Lake ...	13	10	20	16	19	14	8	12	7	8
Old Parkbury ...	4	2	4	2	1	4	10	8	10	8
London										
Colney (G) ...	2	N/V	1	—	—	—	—	2	2	2
Cheshunt (G) ...					8	14	15	24	31	15
Waltham Cross (G) ...	8	15	14	N/V						
Meadgate (Broxbourne) ...	1	—	4	1	4	2	2	2	—	2
Rye Park Lock ...	N/V	N/V	N/V	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
	35	27	51	35	51	64	54	66	85	51
<i>Other Waters</i>										
Troy Mill ...								18	20	18
The Elms, Rickmansworth							2	2	2	2
Batchworth Lake	4	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hamper Mill ...	15	6	12	20	14	24	16	18	34	18
Aldenham Reservoir ...	10	6	10	12	10	8	6	8	6	8
	29	14	24	32	24	32	24	46	62	46
HERTS TOTALS ...	64	41	75	67	75	96	78	112	147	97

KENT	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
<i>Gravel Pits</i>										
Sevenoaks (G) ...	2	—	1	—	—	1	—	2	2	1
Ruxley ...	3	2	2	2	2	5	12	11	5	3
	5	2	3	2	2	6	12	13	7	4
<i>Other Waters</i>										
Kelsey Park, Beckenham ...	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
KENT TOTALS ...	7	2	3	2	2	6	12	13	7	4
MIDDLESEX										
<i>Gravel Pits</i>										
Poyle (G) ...	8	11	14	12	14	21	7	12	12	6
Shepperton										
South ...	20	14	20	10	19	19	15	21	18	10
North ...	12	8	23	20	20	22	8	2	8	13
East ...	2	2	6	6	6	2	3	5	—	2
Sunbury (G) ...	1	2	—	1	2	2	—	1	—	—
West Bedfont ...	2	N/V	filled							
Feltham (G) ...	7	14	23	13	12	24	24	20	16	19
Ashford (G) ...	10	—	3	6	10	N/V	10	11	10	15
Lower Feltham (G) ...	3	N/V	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Hatton (G) ...	10	9	being filled				4	—	—	—
West Drayton ...	N/V	N/V	N/V	4	2	1	2	2	2	2
Yiewsley (G) ...	4	6	2	2	—	3	2	4	14	14
Harefield Moor ...	2	N/V	—	—	N/V	2	—	2	3	1
Springwell ...	7	8	10	16	12	17	12	9	9	10
Littleton (G) ...					2	—	1	5	4	20
Enfield Lock ...	3	—	—	N/V	N/V	10	—	12	19	4
Borstal ...						—	2	10	5	—
	91	74	101	90	99	123	90	116	121	116
<i>Other Waters</i>										
Staines Res. ...	10	13	11	25	34	22	22	25	24	13
do. K.G. VI...					3	23	10	10	9	7
Littleton Res. ...	2	—	12	8	6	3	1	1	4	1
Ruislip Res. ...	5	—	—	—	4	2	2	3	2	2
Kempton Park Reservoirs ...	2	4	4	—	2	5	—	5	4	4
Hampton Dist. Res. ...	N/V	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Stain Hill Res. ...	2	2	4	—	—	—				
Grand Junction Res. and Beds...	—	—	—	—	—	—				
Osterley Park ...	2	2	2	2	4	4	4	6	2	4
Gunnersbury Park	2	2	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Brent Res. ...	4	7	5	4	3	6	6	24	6	10
Edgware Lake ...	N/V	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Kenwood Lake ...								1	—	—
Bushey Park ...									2	N/V
Stoke Newington Reservoirs ...	6	N/V	1	N/V	N/V	3	1	8	7	7
	35	34	45	45	60	72	50	87	64	52
MIDDLESEX TOTALS ...	126	108	146	135	159	195	140	203	185	168

SURREY	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
<i>Gravel Pits</i>										
Ham (G) ...	4	4	—	7	2	8	24	14	2	3
Beddington ...	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Thorpe (G) ...	7	5	6	13	10	13	16	—	6	3
Walton (G) ...	2	1	—	6	15	8	3	4	4	6
	15	10	6	26	27	29	43	18	12	12
<i>Other Waters</i>										
Richmond Park										
Pen Ponds ...	—	—	—	4	4	4	3	3	4	6
Cobham										
Pains Hill Park								2	2	N/V
Weybridge										
Mill Pond ...	4	2	2	2	—	2	2	2	2	2
Seven Arches ...	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	—
Silvermere ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	2
Chelsea and										
Lambeth Res....	9	2	—	2	2	—	—	6	4	—
Walton Res. ...	4	—	9	19	40	22	6	7	6	4
Island Barn Res....	2	—	7	4	22	2	17	3	1	1
Lonsdale Road										
Reservoir ...	2	2	2	2	2	2	6	2	—	—
Barn Elms Res. ...	7	12	—	3	25	8	10	14	26	16
Wimbledon										
Park Lake ...	4	4	12	12	18	20	22	14	15	14
Gatton Park ...	8	14	12	8	15	14	12	14	8	10
Godstone,										
Clayton Ponds				2	—	2	2	2	2	2
South Norwood										
Lake ...	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
SURREY TOTALS...	59	48	52	86	157	107	125	91	88	71
GRAND TOTALS ...	346	243	381	393	554	532	482	627	590	432

List of Observers

G. Ll. Ackers, Miss C. M. Acland, H. E. Andrews, M. Ardley, R. S. Ashley, S. Austin, L. Baker, M. Barter, T. L. Bartlett, W. D. Bedford, Miss M. E. Bennett, H. Bentham, Dr. G. Beven, H. A. Bilby, T. Bispham, Borough Road College (Isleworth) N.H.S., E. A. Bowles, F. C. Bromley, D. W. Brunwin, Miss R. Buxton, L. I. Carrington, S. Cramp, R. Coles, Miss S. Coles, J. R. Crawford, D. A. E. Cross, R. Phillips Dales, C. Dolley, E. H. Down, D. H. A. Edwards, K. V. Elphinstone, H. J. Evans, J. Farrand, D. V. Freshwater, A. C. Frost, E. H. Gillham, Miss E. M. Goom, Miss N. Goom, J. C. Green, H. F. Greenfield, Miss G. A. Hains, R. W. Hale, L. F. Harris, Dr. J. M. Harrison, C. F. Hawes, L. G. Hemmings, J. N. Hobbs, R. C. Hodgson, P. A. D. Hollom, F. J. Holroyde, R. C. Homes, K. E. Hoy, B. P. Hutchins (per G. A. Pyman), A. E. Jolley, C. F. Jones, K. R. Jones (per B. L. Sage), Miss M. E. Kennedy, K. P. Keywood, J. W. Landells, T. Lewis, Miss C. E. Longfield, Dr. G. C. Low, J. M. McMeeking, F. R. Mann, A. Manning, G. E. Manser, D. J. May, J. Meiklejohn,

R. A. S. Melliush, W. N. Mitchell, D. A. T. Morgan, Miss E. M. A. Norris, J. O. Owens, Maj. A. Pam (per J. Farrand), D. Parr, E. R. Parrinder, J. L. F. Parslow, C. H. F. Parsons, E. W. Pearce, G. Wand Piercy, D. E. Pomeroy, D. C. Rattenbury, S. K. Reeves, B. A. Richards, M. G. Ridpath, H. W. Rudd, P. F. C. Rumsey, B. L. Sage, T. B. Smith, Dr. W. J. L. Sladen, Miss E. Souter, Miss A. D. Synge, W. G. Teagle, L. C. Tearnan, Dr. A. G. G. Thompson, W. G. Vincent, C. Walters, Prof. E. H. Warmington, R. B. Warren, C. A. White, Dr. W. H. D. Wince, W. A. Wright.

Report on the Dungeness Bird Observatory, 1956

1956 was a year of continued expansion at the Dungeness Observatory—more visitors, more traps, more birds caught. The number of birds ringed was 7,335, bringing the total since the founding of the Observatory in 1952 to nearly 21,000. The year's total included a Black Tern, a Hoopoe, four Bluethroats, an Icterine Warbler, two Woodchat Shrikes, a Lapland Bunting and two Ortolan Buntings as well as 5 Wrynecks, 18 Cuckoos, 24 Nightingales, 139 Garden Warblers, 251 Redstarts, 441 Chiffchaffs, 854 Willow Warblers and 1,356 Whitethroats.

A full account of the year's work at the Observatory and of the birds seen in the vicinity will be found in the *Kent Bird Report* for 1956.

Prospective visitors to the Observatory are asked to write, well in advance, to the Hon. Secretary, H. A. R. Cawkell, 6 Canute Road, Hastings, Sussex. The Observatory has now acquired new and greatly improved living quarters and there is even a covered garage for visitors' cars.

E. R. PARRINDER.

The Census of Mute Swans, 1955 and 1956

BY S. CRAMP

Summary

1. A census of Mute Swans (*Cygnus olor*), covering both nests and non-breeding birds, was made in the London Area in 1955, and repeated, using different methods, in 1956.
2. 173 nests were reported in 1955 and 188 in 1956, revealing a density much above the national average. Middlesex, with its long stretches of rivers, numerous gravel pits and many park lakes, was the most thickly populated, with a higher density than any reported for any county in Great Britain.
3. In 1955 there were at least 500 non-breeding birds present. More complete counts in 1956 showed some 950 non-breeding birds, or about five to every nesting pair.
4. Some details of breeding success reported are given.

In 1955 the British Trust for Ornithology organized a census of Mute Swans (*Cygnus olor*) in Great Britain, covering both nests and non-breeding birds, and in 1956 a sample census was made over a smaller area. The London Area was included in both years.

The census methods used in the two years were very different. In 1955 the great majority of reports came from members of the public, who were invited on radio and television programmes to participate. In 1956 reliance was placed on the ornithological network; the area being divided into sections and selected observers being responsible for surveying all suitable waters in their section, aided by the knowledge of the nests reported in 1955. This was supplemented by appeals for any isolated records.

Nests

In all 173 nests were located in the London Area in 1955 and 188 in 1956, distributed as follows:—

TABLE 1. NESTS REPORTED

	1955	1956
Middlesex	80	81
Surrey	31	34
Herts	21	18
Essex	19	34
Kent	14	16
Bucks	8	5
TOTALS	<u>173</u>	<u>188</u>

Both census methods probably yielded incomplete results, though for different reasons. In 1955 a remarkable response was obtained from the public, many nests being notified over and over again (the record being 26 for a nest by Carshalton High Street), but nearly 44% of the nests were reported only once, suggesting that a number might have been missed, probably those in the more rural districts and those sites, such as gravel pits, which were less frequented by the general public. In 1956 it is believed that about 95% of suitable waters were fully surveyed (those missed were mainly in parts of Bucks. and Herts), but most of the observers were not able to make more than one visit to any particular water, so that some of the pairs reported as holding territory but not breeding may have nested and failed before the visit or built a nest later.

The figures for the two years are remarkably similar in view of the different census methods, but there were considerable changes in the actual sites used. Thus, of the 173 nest sites in 1955 only about two-thirds (115) were found in use in 1956. Of the remaining 58 sites, no swans were seen at 26, while 17 had a non-breeding pair and five a single bird. The remaining 10 sites were not visited. On the other hand, no less than 73 new nesting sites were reported in 1956, and although many of these were in places less frequented by the public (e.g. 29 along rivers and 20 at gravel pits) there were 11 in parks and other open spaces, at least some of which would probably have been reported had they been occupied in 1955. There is some evidence that, in the London Area as elsewhere, there has been a sharp increase in the numbers of Mute Swans in recent years, but, when account is taken of the limitations of the two census methods, it appears unlikely that there was any great increase in breeding swans in the London Area between 1955 and 1956, and it may be estimated with some confidence that the total nesting population was in the region of 200 pairs in both years.

The distribution of nests in 1955 and 1956 is shown on the accompanying map (Fig. 1). In both years it can be seen that most nests were found along the rivers (59 in 1955 and 65 in 1956) or on lakes and ponds in parks, commons and other public open spaces (58 and 51 respectively). In 1955 other lakes and ponds accounted for 24 nests, followed by gravel pits with 22, but in 1956, almost certainly owing to better coverage, the position was reversed, with 36 on gravel pits and 21 on other lakes and ponds. The remaining nests were found at reservoirs (four and ten respectively), by canals (three and four), in quarries (two and one), and in a dock-basin (one in 1955). Most of the river nests were found along the Thames (16 and 26 respectively), followed by the Colne (13 in both years) and the Lea (eight and five) and Mole (four and six). As the map shows clearly the greatest concentration of nests was along the valleys of the Colne and the upper reaches of the Thames, either on the rivers themselves on the banks and islands, or on nearby lakes and gravel pits. Over the greater part of its length, however, from Kew to Tilbury, the Thames was virtually devoid of nests (there were unsuccessful attempts at Chelsea Dock basin in 1955 and on Chiswick Eyot in 1956, and a successful one on Swanscombe Marshes in 1956). Yet this stretch had the greatest number of non-breeding

birds, as is discussed later, some of which would probably have bred if suitable sites had been available. Almost every river and stream of any size had nesting swans, and, as many of the smaller streams flow through private grounds or lack paths along parts of their length, some nests were probably missed in both years.

Breeding swans were well distributed in the built-up areas, being found on almost all lakes and ponds of sufficient size in parks or on commons, where they were not prevented by the authorities. The pair at Carshalton Ponds were removed in 1956 after a public outcry because they had killed so many ducklings in previous years, and in at least one park it is known that breeding has been controlled for the same reason. Such attacks, however, appear to be largely confined to the more crowded waters, and are by no means invariably found, varying greatly with the temperament of individual birds, the season and other factors which require more investigation. The presence of human beings appears to be no bar to attempts at nesting, but unless a safe island site can be found for the nest the birds often suffer much interference and many eggs are taken. Thus, in 1955 four pairs nested in Kensington Gardens, but only one succeeded in raising any young.

These nest counts revealed a very high density of breeding swans in the London area—about 1.38 nests per ten square miles in 1955 and about 1.50 in 1956, compared with only about 0.50 nest per ten square miles for England as a whole, 0.20 for Wales and 0.13 for Scotland, according to the interim results of the 1955 Census (*Bird Study* (1955), 2 : 156). The number of nests overlooked in the less populous areas is likely to be much greater than in the London area, but even so it is probable that the true breeding density is very much higher than the national average. With the long stretches of the Colne and Thames, numerous gravel pits and many park lakes within its boundaries, Middlesex has easily the highest density of nests within the area. Indeed, it almost certainly has the highest density of any county in Great Britain, with 2.84 nests for every ten square miles in 1955 and 2.88 in 1956. The interim report gives Dorset as the county with the highest total of nests in 1955 (163, of which 122 were at Abbotsbury) but the average density was only 1.67 nests per ten square miles, and the other counties mentioned with high nest totals (Norfolk, Somerset and Wiltshire) had much lower densities. Other parts of the London area had densities well below those found in Middlesex, the highest figures being found in Essex and Hertfordshire, followed by Surrey and Kent. The overall density in both Kent and Surrey is, of course, reduced by the extensive chalk areas where there are few streams or waters suitable for nesting.

Non-breeding Birds

In 1955 only an incomplete account of the non-breeding swans was obtained. The R.S.P.C.A. carried out a most valuable census in mid-April on all waters within some eight miles radius of Charing Cross, which showed that the non-breeding birds were then mainly on the Thames, with

294 birds between Wandsworth Bridge and Twickenham Road Bridge and a further 83 downstream from Wandsworth to Creekmouth. Other observers reported 59 at Richmond and 16 at Staines on different dates. Away from the Thames only some 50 non-breeding birds were reported from all sources, giving a minimum figure of 500 in all for the area. It was expected, however, that the general public were less likely to report non-breeding birds than nests, and arrangements for a fuller count were made in 1956. On 28th April, three observers covered the Thames, by boat or towpath, from Greenwich to Hampton Court Bridge. This count gave a total of 616 non-breeding birds—59 between Greenwich and Westminster Bridge, 408 from Westminster to Kew and 149 from Kew to Hampton Court. Then on 7th May, John Field went by boat from Hurst Park to Staines and counted a further 128 non-breeding birds. No full count was possible downstream from Greenwich, but all observations suggest that at this season non-breeding birds are rarely found there. A few of these birds on the river were in pairs, and two parties of adults still with their last year's young were reported (suggesting that even birds which have once nested may not breed each year thereafter), but the vast majority were in large flocks, concentrated near favourite feeding places, such as the rubbish barges in the middle industrialised stretches of the river and those places where the public regularly feed them, such as Staines, Richmond and the South Bank restaurant. It was not possible to make a simultaneous count on other waters in the Area, but counts at different dates in April and May showed 211 non-breeding birds in all, made up of 42 pairs holding territories, but not apparently nesting, and 127 others, mainly in large herds (e.g. 22 on the Round Pond, 22 at Aldersbrook and 15 at Barn Elms), with a few small parties and odd birds.

These counts give a total of some 950 non-breeding birds in the London Area, or about five to every nesting pair. This is a much higher figure than that for England as a whole (about three to every nesting pair) or for Wales, although not dissimilar to the proportion found in Scotland, according to the interim results for 1955. It is understood that during the annual swan-upping on the Thames it is the custom to pinion all cygnets. This would restrict them to the river or waters connected with it, and because of the shortage of nesting sites along the banks would lead to a higher proportion of non-breeding birds, thus acting as some check on population growth.

Breeding Success

Details of eggs laid, young hatched or young reared were received for some nests. To save space these details have been analysed in tabular form (Table 2), but in very few cases is the full history of any nest known, and mostly the figures shown in the three columns refer to different nests. Only occasional visits were made to some nests, especially in 1956, and the figures cannot therefore be taken as giving an accurate picture of nesting success, but they are included here because they provide some indication of the productivity of swans in the Area and illustrate the wide

range of both clutch and brood size found. The small clutches, however, may be due to interference, for it is a not uncommon practice for eggs to be removed as a control measure.

TABLE 2. BREEDING SUCCESS

<i>Eggs Laid</i>		<i>Young hatched</i>		<i>Young reared</i>	
<i>No. in clutch</i>	<i>No. of clutches</i>	<i>Number hatched</i>	<i>No. of broods</i>	<i>Number reared</i>	<i>No. of broods</i>
1	—	1	8	1	1
2	1	2	10	2	4
3	2	3	20	3	8
4	5	4	11	4	4
5	4	5	18	5	6
6	6	6	15	6	4
7	4	7	16	7	4
8	4	8	7	8	1
9	—	9	4	9	—
10	—	10	1	10	—
Total reported	26		110		32
Average	5.5		4.8		4.3

The above figures exclude complete failures at each stage, and if all known failures are included the averages are 4.4 eggs laid for each nesting pair, 4.0 young hatched and 2.4 young reared. In a census carried out mainly in April and May, failures are more likely to be reported than successes, and it is probable therefore that the average number of young reared, in particular, is too low.

Acknowledgments

These surveys would not have been possible without the help of the many correspondents who supplied information and the observers who undertook the arduous task of covering specific areas. Thanks are also due to the British Trust for Ornithology for permission to analyse the London Area results, and to the Ministry of Works, the London County Council and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for valuable help.

Bird Ringing Report, 1956

As foreshadowed in last year's report, 1956 has proved to be very much a year of transition for the Society's Ringing Scheme.

On January 1st the new B.T.O. ringing permit scheme was introduced and the majority of our ringers decided to become "A" permit ringers—ringing in their own names—since under the new regulations "B" permit ringers ringing solely for the Society may only ring within the Society's area. As it was obvious that the efforts of the few "B" ringers remaining would only represent a small fraction of the ringing carried out each year in the London area and that the old type L.N.H.S. scheme could no longer function effectively—even if that had been desirable—it was agreed that the "B" ringers should be invited to change to "A" ringer status in 1957. It was also decided that, to facilitate the operation of co-operative ringing ventures (which must form the basis of the Society's revised ringing scheme), the Society's area should be divided into four regions each with a representative to act as a focal point for group ringing within his area. This scheme should come into operation in 1957.

Throughout the year schedules for L.N.H.S. issued rings continued to be received from "A" ringers but it has now been agreed that these ringers should, in future, submit schedules for all their rings direct to the Secretary of the B.T.O. Bird-Ringing Committee.

The rising importance of our trapping station at Beddington S.F., which is run by a small but enthusiastic team led by Mr. Brian Milne, is worthy of special mention and a separate report is therefore given below.

The Ringing Sub-Committee abstracted recovery data from the Museum records relating to 270 birds of 46 species (omitting Starlings which will be the subject of special treatment later) either ringed or recovered within the London area. The recovery records will henceforth give a complete picture for the London area since recoveries are now abstracted regardless of whether the ringers are members of the Society. Recoveries of 13 birds ringed abroad and recovered in the area (six of these relating to Black-headed Gulls) were also noted. Details of the most interesting recoveries are given in the Systematic List under Tufted Duck, Greater Black-backed Gull, Common Gull, Black-headed Gull, Swallow, Fieldfare, Song Thrush, Redwing, Black Redstart, Yellow Wagtail, Chaffinch and Brambling.

Ringing notes appeared regularly during the year in the Ornithological Section's Bulletin giving trapping news and details of the most exciting recoveries notified.

W. D. PARK.

Beddington Trapping Station

With the closing of the survey at Beddington Sewage Farm in December 1955, work was commenced on setting up the Society's proposed Trapping Station at Beddington. With the aid of a £5 grant from sectional funds, twenty circular funnel traps were constructed and by the end of the year 1,074 birds of 36 species had been ringed. Interesting species trapped included Little Grebe, Little Owl, Black Redstart, Rock Pipit and Brambling. The severe spell at the commencement of the year induced many unexpected species to enter the traps, and one trap placed in a half frozen dyke caught Lapwing, Snipe, Jack Snipe, Water Rail and Fieldfare.

Interesting recoveries notified during the year included that of the very first Starling ringed by the present team at Beddington, in December, 1954, and recovered three and a half months later at Parnu, Estonia. A Black-headed Gull picked up dead in December, 1955, had been ringed as a nestling in June at Milicz, Southern Poland. Particularly interesting was a Yellow Wagtail ringed at the Farm in July, 1956, and retrapped a month later at a reed-bed roost at Rainham, Essex.

Visitors to the trapping station are welcome but their attention is drawn to the regulations which appear on page 54 of the *L.B.R.* for 1955.

B. S. MILNE.

Book Review

VOICES OF THE WILD. Eric Simms. *Putnam*, London, 1957, 21s. Pp. 230, 18 photographs.

An account of the author's experiences in Britain, the Camargue and Spain obtaining recordings of the voices of birds, and to a lesser extent of animals, many of which have been broadcast by the B.B.C. Complete chapters are devoted to the Little Ringed Plover, Stone Curlew and Badger. Finally there is a description of the apparatus used, which has been much improved in recent years. One's main regret on putting down this interesting and readable book is that the recordings obtained are not more readily available.

Recording Arrangements

The Society's Area is bounded by a circle of 20 miles radius centred on St. Paul's Cathedral. The recorders, whose names and addresses are given below, welcome records from members and non-members. It materially assists the speedy entering of records if the following points are observed.

1. Please use the Society's recording sheets, which can be obtained from the Recorders. Submit records for North of the Thames, South of the Thames, and Inner London on separate sheets.
2. Please enter records by species in the Wetmore Order, which is used in this report. It is particularly requested that date order should not be used, as this inevitably slows down the work of transferring entries from the recording sheets to the card index which is used in the preparation of the report.
3. Please submit copies of field notes for all records of rare or unusual species.
4. Completed recording sheets should be submitted in August for the period January to July, in November for the period August to October, and in the first week of January for November and December.

Copies of the B.T.O. Field List of British Birds, which is in the Wetmore Order, may be obtained from Miss L. B. Langham, 164 St. Ann's Hill, S.W.18, price 6d. each, plus postage 2d. each ; 12 copies post free.

Recorders

Inner London	...	...	...	...	W. G. TEAGLE, Flat No. 6, 2 The Paragon, Blackheath, S.E.3.
South of the Thames and River Thames					H. P. MEDHURST, 54 Windermere Road, London, S.W.16.
North of the Thames	J. L. F. PARSLow, c/o Bird Room, British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7.

THE LONDON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Founded in 1858

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PUBLICATIONS. All Members and Associates (other than additional family members) are entitled to one free copy of the LONDON NATURALIST and LONDON BIRD REPORT.

AFFILIATIONS. The Society is affiliated to the British Association for the Advancement of Science ; the South Eastern Union of Scientific Societies ; the Commons, Open Spaces, and Footpaths Preservation Society ; the British Ecological Society ; the British Trust for Ornithology ; the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society ; the Geologists' Association ; the Ray Society ; and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Skokholm Bird Observatory

FIELD STUDIES COUNCIL

Skokholm, an island of 260 acres, three miles from the Pembrokeshire coast, supports a breeding population of some 20,000 birds. Among them are the manx shearwater, storm petrel, puffin, razorbill, guillemot, raven, buzzard, oystercatcher, lapwing and others. Most of these birds can be studied with ease. Expeditions are made at night to catch manx shearwaters and storm petrels. Three heligoland traps enable visitors to catch many of the migrants passing through the island and to see and handle both the common and unusual birds. As well as catching birds there are many other ways in which bird-watchers can assist the observatory staff.

In 1958 we shall again be asking for help from the visitors as in previous years and, at the same time, we shall continue to give instruction when it is asked for. It is hoped that under the direction of the warden the visitors will undertake co-operative work on the sea-bird population, but we would like to emphasize that this work is only for those who would join in and no one need feel obliged to take part.

The observatory will stay open until the end of October so that the autumn migration can be studied. This is the time when the greatest variety of species is likely to occur.

Accommodation in the Observatory buildings is provided for eight visitors a week and the charge is six guineas. For further particulars apply to the Warden, Dale Fort Field Centre, Haverfordwest, Pembs.

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